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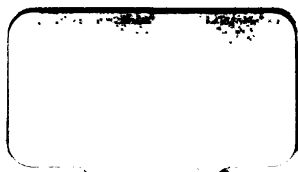
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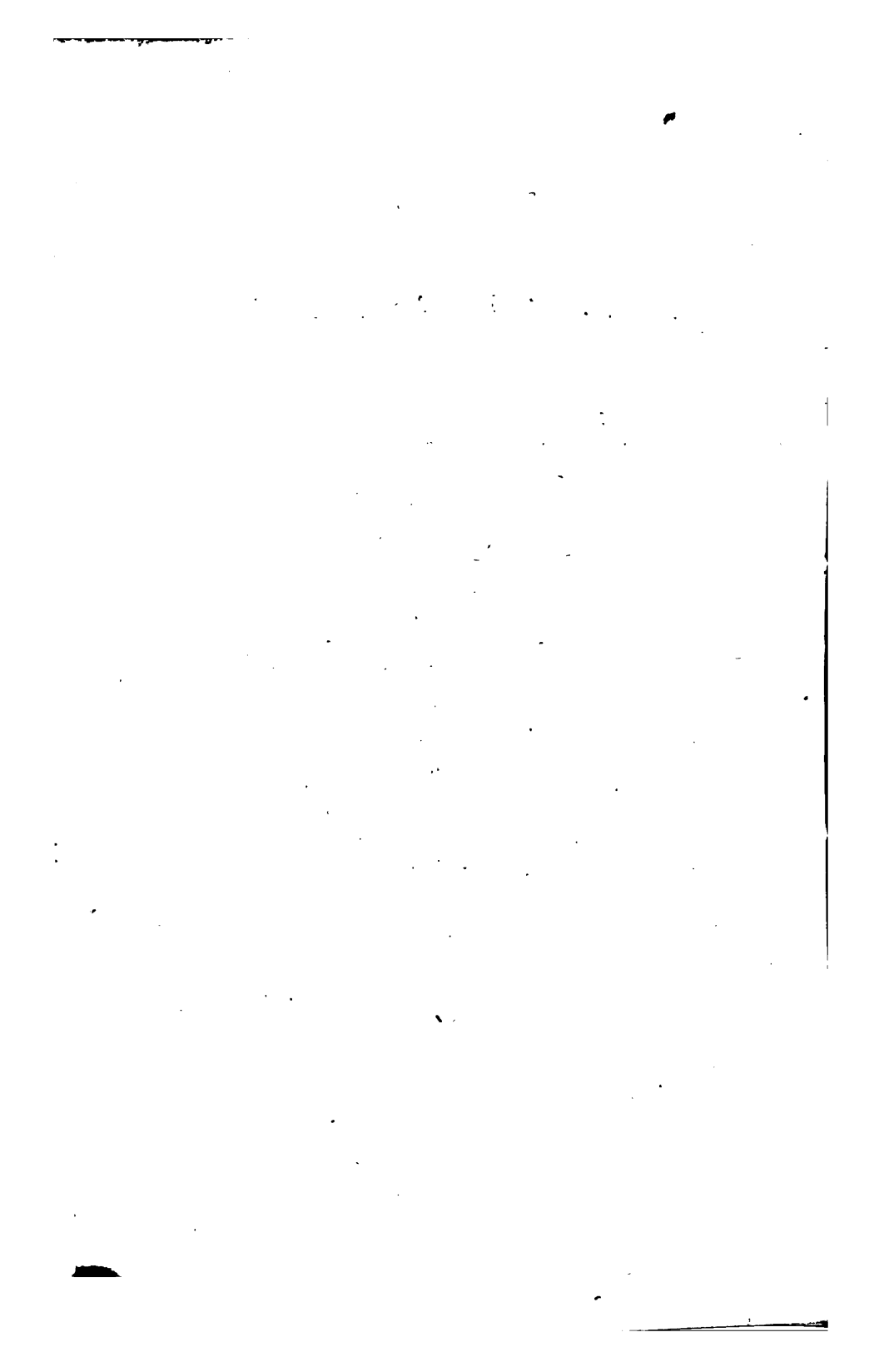




MR. B U R K E'S  
S P E E C H,  
O N  
MR. FOX'S *East India* Bill.

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[ Price 2 s. ]



MR. B U R K E ' S  
S P E E C H,

On the 1st DECEMBER 1783,

U P O N

THE QUESTION FOR THE SPEAKER'S  
LEAVING THE CHAIR,

IN ORDER FOR THE HOUSE TO RESOLVE  
ITSELF INTO A COMMITTEE

O N

MR. FOX's *East India* Bill.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for J. DODSLEY, in PALL-MALL.

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M.DCC.LXXXIV.





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## S P E E C H, &c.

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MR. SPEAKER,

I THANK you for pointing to me. I really wished much to engage your attention in an early stage of the debate. I have been long very deeply, though perhaps ineffectually, engaged in the preliminary enquiries, which have continued without intermission for some years. Though I have felt, with some degree of sensibility, the natural and inevitable impressions of the several matters of fact, as they have been successively disclosed, I have not at any time attempted to trouble you on the merits of the subject; and very little on any of the points which incidentally arose in the course of our proceedings. But I should be sorry to be found totally silent upon this day. Our enquiries are now come to their final issue:—It is now to be determined whether the three years of laborious parliamentary research, whether the twenty years

B of

of patient Indian suffering, are to produce a substantial reform in our Eastern administration; or whether our knowledge of the grievances has abated our zeal for the correction of them, and whether our very enquiry into the evil was only a pretext to elude the remedy which is demanded from us by humanity, by justice, and by every principle of true policy. Depend upon it, this business cannot be indifferent to our fame. It will turn out a matter of great disgrace or great glory to the whole British nation. We are on a conspicuous stage, and the world marks our demeanour.

I am therefore a little concerned to perceive the spirit and temper in which the debate has been all along pursued, upon one side of the House. The declamation of the Gentlemen who oppose the bill has been abundant and vehement, but they have been reserved and even silent about the fitness or unfitness of the plan to attain the direct object it has in view. By some gentlemen it is taken up (by way of exercise I presume) as a point of law on a question of private property, and corporate franchise; by others it is regarded as the petty intrigue of a faction at court, and argued merely as it tends to set this man a little higher, or that a little lower in situation and power. All the void has been filled up with invectives against coalition; with allusions to the loss of America; with the activity and inactivity of ministers. The total silence of these gentlemen concerning the interest and well-being of the people of India, and concerning the interest which this nation has in the commerce and revenues of that country, is a strong indication of the value which they set upon these objects.

It

It has been a little painful to me to observe the intrusion into this important debate of such company as *Quo Warranto*, and *Mandamus*, and *Certiorari*; as if we were on a trial about mayors and aldermen, and capital burgessees; or engaged in a suit concerning the borough of Penryn, or Saltash, or St. Ives, or St. Mawes. Gentlemen have argued with as much heat and passion, as if the first things in the world were at stake; and their topics are such, as belong only to matter of the lowest and meanest litigation. It is not right, it is not worthy of us, in this manner to depreciate the value, to degrade the majesty of this grave deliberation of policy and empire.

For my part, I have thought myself bound, when a matter of this extraordinary weight came before me, not to consider (as some Gentlemen are so fond of doing) whether the bill originated from a Secretary of State for the home department, or from a Secretary for the foreign; from a minister of influence or a minister of the people; from Jacob or from Esau\*. I asked myself, and I asked myself nothing else, what part it was fit for a member of parliament, who has supplied a mediocrity of talents by the extreme of diligence, and who has thought himself obliged, by the research of years, to wind himself into the inmost recesses and labyrinths of the Indian detail, what part, I say, it became such a member of parliament to take, when a minister of state, in conformity to a recommendation from the throne, has brought before us a system for the better government of the territory and commerce of the East. In this light, and in this only, I will trouble you with my sentiments.

\* An allusion made by Mr. Powis.

It is not only agreed but demanded, by the Right Honourable gentleman\*, and by those who act with him, that a *whole* system ought to be produced; that it ought not to be an *half measure*; that it ought to be no *palliative*; but a legislative provision, vigorous, substantial, and effective.—I believe that no man who understands the subject can doubt for a moment, that those must be the conditions of any thing deserving the name of a reform in the Indian government; that any thing short of them would not only be delusive, but, in this matter which admits no medium, noxious in the extreme.

To all the conditions proposed by his adversaries the mover of the bill perfectly agrees; and on his performance of them he rests his cause. On the other hand, not the least objection has been taken, with regard to the efficiency, the vigour, or the completeness of the scheme. I am therefore warranted to assume, as a thing admitted, that the bills accomplish what both sides of the House demand as essential. The end is completely answered, so far as the direct and immediate object is concerned.

But though there are no direct, yet there are various collateral objections made; objections from the effects, which this plan of reform for Indian administration may have on the privileges of great public bodies in England; from its probable influence on the constitutional rights, or on the freedom and integrity of the several branches of the legislature.

• Mr. Pitt:

Before

Before I answer these objections, I must beg leave to observe, that if we are not able to contrive some method of governing India *well*, which will not of necessity become the means of governing Great Britain *ill*, a ground is laid for their eternal separation; but none for sacrificing the people of that country to our constitution. I am however far from being persuaded that any such incompatibility of interest does at all exist. On the contrary I am certain that every means, effectual to preserve India from oppression, is a guard to preserve the British constitution from its worst corruption. To shew this, I will consider the objections, which I think are four.

1st. That the bill is an attack on the chartered rights of men.

2dly. That it increases the influence of the crown.

3dly. That it does *not* increase, but diminishes, the influence of the crown, in order to promote the interests of certain ministers and their party.

4thly. That it deeply affects the national credit.

As to the first of these objections; I must observe that the phrase of "the chartered rights of *men*," is full of affectation; and very unusual in the discussion of privileges conferred by charters of the present description. But it is not difficult to discover what end that ambiguous mode of expression, so often reiterated, is meant to answer.

The rights of *men*, that is to say, the natural rights of mankind, are indeed sacred things; and if any public measure is proved mischievously to affect them, the objection ought to be fatal to that

measure, even if no charter at all could be set up against it. If these natural rights are further affirmed and declared by express covenants, if they are clearly defined and secured against chicane, against power, and authority, by written instruments and positive engagements, they are in a still better condition: they partake not only of the sanctity of the object so secured, but of that solemn public faith itself, which secures an object of such importance. Indeed this formal recognition, by the sovereign power, of an original right in the subject, can never be subverted, but by rooting up the holding radical principles of government, and even of society itself. The charters, which we call by distinction *great*, are public instruments of this nature; I mean the charters of King John and King Henry the Third. The things secured by these instruments may, without any deceitful ambiguity, be very fitly called the *chartered rights of men*.

These charters have made the very name of a charter dear to the heart of every Englishman—But, Sir, there may be, and there are charters, not only different in nature, but formed on principles the *very reverse* of those of the great charter. Of this kind is the charter of the East India Company. *Magna charta* is a charter to restrain power, and to destroy monopoly. The East India charter is a charter to establish monopoly, and to create power. Political power and commercial monopoly are *not* the rights of men; and the rights to them derived from charters, it is fallacious and sophistical to call “the chartered rights of men.” These chartered rights, (to speak of such charters and of their effects in terms of the greatest possible

possible moderation) do at least suspend the natural rights of mankind at large; and in their very frame and constitution are liable to fall into a direct violation of them.

It is a charter of this latter description (that is to say a charter of power and monopoly) which is affected by the bill before you. The bill, Sir, does, without question, affect it; it does affect it essentially and substantially. But, having stated to you, of what description the chartered rights are which this bill touches, I feel no difficulty at all in acknowledging the existence of those chartered rights, in their fullest extent. They belong to the Company in the surest manner; and they are secured to that body by every sort of public sanction. They are stamped by the faith of the King; they are stamped by the faith of Parliament; they have been bought for money, for money honestly and fairly paid; they have been bought for valuable consideration, over and over again.

I therefore freely admit to the East India Company their claim to exclude their fellow-subjects from the commerce of half the globe. I admit their claim to administer an annual territorial revenue of seven millions sterling; to command an army of sixty thousand men; and to dispose, (under the control of a sovereign imperial discretion, and with the due observance of the natural and local law) of the lives and fortunes of thirty millions of their fellow-creatures. All this they possess by charter and by acts of parliament, (in my opinion) without a shadow of controversy.

Those who carry the rights and claims of the Company the furthest do not contend for more than this; and all this I freely grant. But granting all this, they must grant to me in my turn, that all political power which is set over men, and that

all privilege claimed or exercised in exclusion of them, being wholly artificial, and for so much, a derogation from the natural equality of mankind at large, ought to be some way or other exercised ultimately for their benefit.

If this is true with regard to every species of political dominion, and every description of commercial privilege, none of which can be original self-derived rights, or grants for the mere private benefit of the holders, then such rights, or privileges, or whatever else you choose to call them, are all in the strictest sense a *trust*; and it is of the very essence of every trust to be rendered *accountable*; and even *totally to cease*, when it substantially varies from the purposes for which alone it could have a lawful existence.

This I conceive, Sir, to be true of trusts of power vested in the highest hands, and of such as seem to hold of no human creature. But about the application of this principle to subordinate *derivative* trusts, I do not see how a controversy can be maintained. To whom then would I make the East India Company accountable? Why, to Parliament to be sure; to Parliament, from whom their trust was derived; to Parliament, which alone is capable of comprehending the magnitude of its object, and its abuse; and alone capable of an effectual legislative remedy. The very charter, which is held out to exclude Parliament from correcting malversation with regard to the high trust vested in the Company, is the very thing which at once gives a title and imposes a duty on us to interfere with effect, wherever power and authority originating from ourselves are perverted from their purposes, and become instruments of wrong and violence.



If Parliament, Sir, had nothing to do with this charter, we might have some sort of Epicurean excuse to stand aloof, indifferent spectators of what passes in the Company's name in India and in London. But if we are the very cause of the evil, we are in a special manner engaged to the redress; and for us passively to bear with oppressions committed under the sanction of our own authority, is in truth and reason for this House to be an active accomplice in the abuse.

That the power notoriously, grossly, abused has been bought from us is very certain. But this circumstance, which is urged against the bill, becomes an additional motive for our interference; lest we should be thought to have sold the blood of millions of men, for the base consideration of money. We sold, I admit; all that we had to sell; that is our authority, not our control. We had not a right to make a market of our duties.

I ground myself therefore on this principle—that if the abuse is proved, the contract is broken; and we re-enter into all our rights; that is, into the exercise of all our duties. Our own authority is indeed as much a trust originally; as the Company's authority is a trust derivatively; and it is the use we make of the resumed power that must justify or condemn us in the resumption of it. When we have perfected the plan laid before us by the Right Honourable mover, the world will then see what it is we destroy, and what it is we create. By that test we stand or fall; and by that test I trust that it will be found in the issue, that we are going to supersede a charter abused to the full extent of all the powers which it could abuse, and exercised in the plenitude of despotism, tyranny, and corruption; and

and that, in one and the same plan, we provide a real chartered security for the *rights of men* cruelly violated under that charter.

This bill, and those connected with it, are intended to form the *Magna Charta* of Hindostan. Whatever the treaty of Westphalia is to the liberty of the princes and free cities of the empire, and to the three religions there professed—Whatever the great charter, the statute of tallage, the petition of right, and the declaration of right, are to Great Britain, these bills are to the people of India. Of this benefit, I am certain, their condition is capable; and when I know that they are capable of more, my vote shall most assuredly be for our giving to the full extent of their capacity of receiving; and no charter of dominion shall stand as a bar in my way to their charter of safety and protection.

The strong admission I have made of the Company's rights (I am conscious of it) binds me to do a great deal. I do not presume to condemn those who argue *a priori*, against the propriety of leaving such extensive political powers in the hands of a company of merchants. I know much is, and much more may be said against such a system. But, with my particular ideas and sentiments, I cannot go that way to work. I feel an insuperable reluctance in giving my hand to destroy any established institution of government, upon a theory, however plausible it may be. My experience in life teaches me nothing clear upon the subject. I have known merchants with the sentiments and the abilities of great statesmen; and I have seen persons in the rank of statesmen, with the conceptions and character of pedlars. Indeed, my observation has furnished me with  
nothing

nothing that is to be found in any habits of life or education, which tends wholly to disqualify men for the functions of government, but that, by which the power of exercising those functions is very frequently obtained, I mean, a spirit and habits of low cabal, and intrigue; which I have never, in one instance, seen united with a capacity for sound and manly policy.

To justify us in taking the administration of their affairs out of the hands of the East India Company, on my principles, I must see several conditions. 1st. The object affected by the abuse should be great and important. 2d. The abuse affecting this great object ought to be a great abuse. 3d. It ought to be habitual, and not accidental. 4th. It ought to be utterly incurable in the body as it now stands constituted. All this ought to be made as visible to me as the light of the sun, before I should strike off an atom of their charter. A Right Honourable gentleman \*has said, and said I think but once, and that very slightly (whatever his original demand for a plan might seem to require) that "there are abuses in the "Company's government." If that were all, the scheme of the mover of this bill, the scheme of his learned friend, and his own scheme of reformation (if he has any) are all equally needless. There are, and must be, abuses in all governments. It amounts to no more than a nugatory proposition. But before I consider of what nature these abuses are, of which the gentleman speaks so very lightly, permit me to recall to your recollection the map of the country which this abused chartered right affects. This I shall do, that you

• Mr. Pitt.

may

may judge whether in that map I can discover any thing like the first of my conditions ; that is, Whether the object affected by the abuse of the East India Company's power be of importance sufficient to justify the measure and means of reform applied to it in this bill.

With very few, and those inconsiderable intervals, the British dominion, either in the Company's name, or in the names of princes absolutely dependent upon the Company, extends from the mountains that separate India from Tartary, to Cape Comorin, that is, one-and-twenty degrees of latitude !

In the northern parts it is a solid mass of land, about eight hundred miles in length, and four or five hundred broad. As you go southward, it becomes narrower for a space. It afterwards dilates ; but narrower or broader, you possess the whole eastern and north-eastern coast of that vast country, quite from the borders of Pegu. — Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, with Benares (now unfortunately in our immediate possession) measure 161,978 square English miles ; a territory considerably larger than the whole kingdom of France. Oude, with its dependent provinces, is 53,286 square miles, not a great deal less than England. The Carnatic, with Tanjour and the Circars, is 65,948 square miles, very considerably larger than England ; and the whole of the Company's dominion comprehending Bombay and Salsette, amounts to 281,412 square miles ; which forms a territory larger than any European dominion, Russia and Turkey excepted. Through all that vast extent of country there is not a man who eats a mouthful of rice but by permission of the East India Company.

So

So far with regard to the extent. The population of this great empire is not easy to be calculated. When the countries, of which it is composed, came into our possession, they were all eminently peopled, and eminently productive; though at that time considerably declined from their antient prosperity. But since they are come into our hands! ———! However if we take the period of our estimate immediately before the utter desolation of the Carnatic, and if we allow for the havoc which our government had even then made in these regions, we cannot, in my opinion, rate the population at much less than thirty millions of souls; more than four times the number of persons in the island of Great Britain.

My next enquiry to that of the number, is the quality and description of the inhabitants. This multitude of men does not consist of an abject and barbarous populace; much less of gangs of savages, like the Guaranies and Chiquitos, who wander on the waste borders of the river of Amazons, or the Plate; but a people for ages civilized and cultivated; cultivated by all the arts of polished life, whilst we were yet in the woods. There, have been (and still the skeletons remain) princes once of great dignity, authority, and opulence. There, are to be found the chiefs of tribes and nations. There is to be found an antient and venerable priesthood, the depository of their laws, learning, and history, the guides of the people whilst living, and their consolation in death; a nobility of great antiquity and renown; a multitude of cities, not exceeded in population and trade by those of the first class in Europe; merchants and bankers, individual  
houses

houses of whom have once vied in capital with the Bank of England; whose credit had often supported a tottering state, and preserved their governments in the midst of war and desolation; millions of ingenious manufacturers and mechanicks; millions of the most diligent, and not the least intelligent, tillers of the earth. Here are to be found almost all the religions professed by men, the Bramincal, the Mussulmen, the Eastern and the Western Christians.

If I were to take the whole aggregate of our possessions there, I should compare it, as the nearest parallel I can find, with the empire of Germany. Our immediate possessions I should compare with the Austrian dominions, and they would not suffer in the comparison. The Nabob of Oude might stand for the King of Prussia; the Nabob of Arcot I would compare, as superior in territory, and equal in revenue, to the Elector of Saxony. Cheyt Sing, the Rajah of Benares, might well rank with the Prince of Hesse at least; and the Rajah of Tanjore (though hardly equal in extent of dominion, superior in revenue) to the Elector of Bavaria. The Polygars and the northern Zemindars, and other great chiefs, might well class with the rest of the Princes, Dukes, Counts, Marquisses, and Bishops in the empire; all of whom I mention to honour, and surely without disparagement to any or all of those most respectable princes and grantees.

All this vast mass, composed of so many orders and classes of men, is again infinitely diversified by manners, by religion, by hereditary employment, through all their possible combinations. This renders the handling of India a matter in an  
high

high degree critical and delicate. But oh ! it has been handled rudely indeed. Even some of the reformers seem to have forgot that they had any thing to do but to regulate the tenants of a manor, or the shopkeepers of the next county town.

It is an empire of this extent, of this complicated nature, of this dignity and importance, that I have compared to Germany, and the German government ; not for an exact resemblance, but as a sort of a middle term, by which India might be approximated to our understandings, and if possible to our feelings ; in order to awaken something of sympathy for the unfortunate natives, of which I am afraid we are not perfectly susceptible, whilst we look at this very remote object through a false and cloudy medium.

My second condition, necessary to justify me in touching the charter, is, Whether the Company's abuse of their trust, with regard to this great object, be an abuse of great atrocity. I shall beg your permission to consider their conduct in two lights ; first the political, and then the commercial. Their political conduct (for distinctness) I divide again into two heads ; the external, in which I mean to comprehend their conduct in their federal capacity, as it relates to powers and states independent, or that not long since were such ; the other internal, namely their conduct to the countries either immediately subject to the Company, or to those who, under the apparent government of native sovereigns, are in a state much lower, and much more miserable, than common subjection.

The attention, Sir, which I wish to preserve to method will not be considered as unnecessary or affected.

affected. Nothing else can help me to selection out of the infinite mass of materials which have passed under my eye; or can keep my mind steady to the great leading points I have in view.

With regard therefore to the abuse of the external federal trust, I engage myself to you to make good these three positions:—First, I say, that from Mount Imaus, (or whatever else you call that large range of mountains that walls the northern frontier of India) where it touches us in the latitude of twenty-nine, to Cape Comorin, in the latitude of eight, that there is not a *single* prince, state, or potentate, great or small, in India, with whom they have come into contact, whom they have not sold. I say *sold*, though sometimes they have not been able to deliver according to their bargain.—Secondly, I say, that there is not a *single treaty* they have ever made, which they have not broken.—Thirdly, I say, that there is not a single prince or state, who ever put any trust in the Company, who is not utterly ruined; and that none are in any degree secure or flourishing, but in the exact proportion to their settled distrust and irreconcilable enmity to this nation.

These assertions are universal. I say in the full sense *universal*. They regard the external and political trust only; but I shall produce others fully equivalent, in the internal. For the present, I shall content myself with explaining my meaning; and if I am called on for proof whilst these bills are depending (which I believe I shall not) I will put my finger on the Appendixes to the Reports, or on papers of record in the House, or the Committees, which I have distinctly present to my memory, and which I think I can lay before you at half an hour's warning.



The first potentate sold by the Company for money was the Great Mogul—the descendant of Tamerlane. This high personage, as high as human veneration can look at, is by every account amiable in his manners, respectable for his piety according to his mode, and accomplished in all the Oriental literature. All this, and the title derived under his *charter*, to all that we hold in India, could not save him from the general *sale*. Money is coined in his name; In his name justice is administered; He is prayed for in every temple through the countries we possess—But he was sold.

It is impossible, Mr. Speaker, not to pause here for a moment, to reflect on the inconstancy of human greatness, and the stupendous revolutions that have happened in our age of wonders. Could it be believed, when I entered into existence; or when you, a younger man, were born, that on this day, in this House, we should be employed in discussing the conduct of those British subjects who had disposed of the power and person of the Grand Mogul? This is no idle speculation. Awful lessons are taught by it, and by other events, of which it is not yet too late to profit.

This is hardly a digression; but I return to the sale of the Mogul. Two districts, Corah and Allahabad, out of his immense grants, were reserved as a royal demesne to the donor of a kingdom, and the rightful sovereign of so many nations. — After withholding the tribute of £.260,000 a year, which the Company was, by the *charter* they had received from this prince, under the most solemn obligation to pay, these districts were sold to his chief minister Sujah ul Dowlah; and, what may appear to some the worst part of

the transaction, these two districts were sold for scarcely two years purchase. The descendant of Tamerlane now stands in need almost of the common necessities of life; and in this situation we do not even allow him, as bounty, the smallest portion of what we owe him in justice.

The next sale was that of the whole nation of the Rohillas, which the grand salesman, without a pretence of quarrel, and contrary to his own declared sense of duty and rectitude, sold to the same Sujah ul Dowlah. He sold the people to utter *extirpation*, for the sum of four hundred thousand pounds. Faithfully was the bargain performed upon our side. Hafiz Rhamet, the most eminent of their chiefs, one of the bravest men of his time, and as famous throughout the East for the elegance of his literature, and the spirit of his poetical compositions (by which he supported the name of Hafiz) as for his courage, was invaded with an army of an hundred thousand men, and an English brigade. This man, at the head of inferior forces, was slain valiantly fighting for his country. His head was cut off, and delivered for money to a barbarian. His wife and children, persons of that rank, were seen begging a handful of rice through the English camp. The whole nation, with inconsiderable exceptions, was slaughtered or banished. The country was laid waste with fire and sword; and that land distinguished above most others, by the chearful face of paternal government and protected labour, the chosen seat of cultivation and plenty, is now almost throughout a dreary desert, covered with rushes and briars, and jungles full of wild beasts.

The British officer who commanded in the delivery of the people thus sold, felt some  
 compunction

compunction at his employment. He represented these enormous excesses to the president of Bengal, for which he received a severe reprimand from the civil governor; and I much doubt whether the breach caused by the conflict, between the compassion of the military and the firmness of the civil governor, be closed at this hour.

In Bengal, Seraja Dowla was sold to Mir Jaffier; Mir Jaffier was sold to Mir Cossim; and Mir Cossim was sold to Mir Jaffier again. The succession to Mir Jaffier was sold to his eldest son;—another son of Mir Jaffier, Mobarech ul Dowla, was sold to his step-mother—The Maratta empire was sold to Ragoba; and Ragoba was sold and delivered to the Peishwa of the Marattas. Both Ragoba and the Peishwa of the Marattas were offered to sale to the Rajah of Berar. Scindia, the chief of Malva, was offered to sale to the same Rajah; and the Subah of the Decan was sold to the great trader Mahomet Ali, Nabob of Arcot. To the same Nabob of Arcot they sold Hyder Ali and the kingdom of Mysore. To Mahomet Ali they twice sold the kingdom of Tanjore. To the same Mahomet Ali they sold at least twelve sovereign princes, called the Polygars. But to keep things even, the territory of Tinnivelly, belonging to their Nabob, they would have sold to the Dutch; and to conclude the account of sales, their great customer, the Nabob of Arcot himself, and his lawful succession, has been sold to his second son, Amir ul Omrah, whose character, views, and conduct, are in the accounts upon your table. It remains with you whether they shall finally perfect this last bargain.

All these bargains and sales were regularly attended with the waste and havoc of the country, always by the buyer, and sometimes by the

object of the sale. This was explained to you by the Honourable mover, when he stated the mode of paying debts due from the country powers to the Company. An Honourable gentleman, who is not now in his place, objected to his jumping near two thousand miles for an example. But the southern example is perfectly applicable to the northern claim, as the northern is to the southern;—for, throughout the whole space of these two thousand miles, take your stand where you will, the proceeding is perfectly uniform, and what is done in one part will apply exactly to the other.

My second assertion is, that the Company never has made a treaty which they have not broken. This position is so connected with that of the sales of provinces and kingdoms, with the negotiation of universal distraction in every part of India, that a very minute detail may well be spared on this point. It has not yet been contended, by any enemy to the reform, that they have observed any public agreement. When I hear that they have done so in any one instance (which hitherto, I confess, I never heard alledged) I shall speak to the particular treaty. The governor general has even amused himself and the Court of Directors in a very singular letter to that board, in which he admits he has not been very delicate with regard to public faith; and he goes so far as to state a regular estimate of the sums which the Company would have lost, or never acquired, if the rigid ideas of public faith entertained by his colleagues had been observed. \* The learned gentleman over against me has indeed saved me much trouble. On a former occasion he obtained no small credit, for the clear and forcible manner in which he

\* Mr. Dundas, Lord Advocate of Scotland.

stated

stated what we have not forgot, and I hope he has not forgot, that universal systematic breach of treaties which had made the British faith proverbial in the East.

It only remains, Sir, for me just to recapitulate some heads.—The treaty with the Mogul, by which we stipulated to pay him £.260,000 annually, was broken. This treaty they have broken, and not paid him a shilling. They broke their treaty with him, in which they stipulated to pay £.400,000 a year to the Soubah of Bengal. They agreed with the Mogul, for services admitted to have been performed, to pay Nudjif Cawn a pension. They broke this article with the rest, and stopped also this small pension. They broke their treaties with the Nizam, and with Hyder Ali. As to the Marattas, they had so many cross-treaties with the States General of that nation, and with each of the chiefs, that it was notorious, that no one of these agreements could be kept without grossly violating the rest. It was observed, that if the terms of these several treaties had been kept, two British armies would at one and the same time have met in the field to cut each other's throats. The wars which desolate India, originated from a most atrocious violation of public faith on our part. In the midst of profound peace, the Company's troops invaded the Maratta territories, and surprised the island and fortress of Salsette. The Marattas nevertheless yielded to a treaty of peace, by which solid advantages were procured to the Company. But this treaty, like every other treaty, was soon violated by the Company. Again the Company invaded the Maratta dominions. The disaster that ensued gave occasion to a new

treaty. The whole army of the Company was obliged, in effect, to surrender to this injured, betrayed, and insulted people. Justly irritated however, as they were, the terms which they prescribed were reasonable and moderate; and their treatment of their captive invaders, of the most distinguished humanity. But the humanity of the Marattas was of no power whatsoever to prevail on the Company to attend to the observance of the terms dictated by their moderation. The war was renewed with greater vigour than ever; and such was their insatiable lust of plunder, that they never would have given ear to any terms of peace, if Hyder Ali had not broke through the Gauts, and rushing like a torrent into the Carnatic, swept away every thing in his career. This was in consequence of that confederacy, which by a sort of miracle united the most discordant powers for our destruction, as a nation in which no other could put any trust, and who were the declared enemies of the human species.

It is very remarkable, that the late controversy between the several presidencies, and between them and the Court of Directors, with relation to these wars and treaties, has not been, which of the parties might be defended for his share in them; but on which of the parties the guilt of all this load of perfidy should be fixed. But I am content to admit all these proceedings to be perfectly regular, to be full of honour and good faith; and wish to fix your attention solely to that single transaction which the advocates of this system select for so transcendent a merit as to cancel the guilt of all the rest of their proceedings; I mean the late treaties with the Marattas.

I make no observation on the total cession of territory,

territory, by which they surrendered all they had obtained by their unhappy successes in war, and almost all that they had obtained under the treaty of Poorunder. The restitution was proper, if it had been voluntary and seasonable. I attach on the spirit of the treaty, the dispositions it shewed, the provisions it made for a general peace, and the faith kept with allies and confederates; in order that the House may form a judgment, from this chosen piece, of the use which has been made (and is likely to be made, if things continue in the same hands) of the trust of the federal powers of this country.

It was the wish of almost every Englishman, that the Maratta peace might lead to a general one; because the Maratta war was only a part of a general confederacy formed against us on account of the universal abhorrence of our conduct which prevailed in every state and almost in every house in India. Mr. Hastings was obliged to pretend some sort of acquiescence in this general and rational desire. He therefore consented, in order to satisfy the point of honour of the Marattas, that an article should be inserted to admit Hyder Ali to accede to the pacification. But observe, Sir, the spirit of this man (which if it were not made manifest by a thousand things, and particularly by his proceedings with regard to Lord Macartney) would be sufficiently manifest by this—What sort of article, think you does he require this essential head of a solemn treaty of general pacification to be? In his instruction to Mr. Anderson, he desires him to admit “a *vague* article” in favour of Hyder. Evasion and fraud were the declared basis of the treaty. These *vague* articles, intended for a more *vague* performance,

formance, are the things which have damned our reputation in India.

Hardly was this vague article inserted, than, without waiting for any act on the part of Hyder, Mr. Hastings enters into a negociation with the Maratta Chief, Scindia, for a partition of the territories of the prince who was one of the objects to be secured by the treaty. He was to be parcelled out in three parts—one to Scindia ; one to the Peishwa of the Marattas ; and the third to the East India Company, or to (the old dealer and chapman) Mahomet Ali.

During the formation of this project, Hyder dies ; and before his son could take any one step, either to conform to the tenour of the article, or to contravene it, the treaty of partition is renewed on the old footing, and an instruction is sent to Mr. Anderson to conclude it in form.

A circumstance intervened, during the pendency of this negociation, to set off the good faith of the Company with an additional brilliancy, and to make it sparkle and glow with a variety of splendid faces. General Matthews had reduced that most valuable part of Hyder's dominions called the Country of Biddnore. When the news reached Mr. Hastings he instructed Mr. Anderson to contend for an alteration in the treaty of partition, and to take the Biddnore country out of the common stock which was to be divided, and to keep it for the Company.

The first ground for this variation was its being a separate conquest made before the treaty had actually taken place. Here was a new proof given of the fairness, equity, and moderation, of the Company. But the second of Mr. Hastings's reasons for retaining the Biddnore as a separate portion,



portion, and his conduct on that second ground, is still more remarkable. He asserted that that country could not be put into the partition stock, because General Matthews had received it on the terms of some convention, which might be incompatible with the partition proposed. This was a reason in itself both honourable and solid; and it shewed a regard to faith somewhere, and with some persons. But in order to demonstrate his utter contempt of the plighted faith which was alledged on one part as a reason for departing from it on another, and to prove his impetuous desire for sowing a new war, even in the prepared soil of a general pacification, he directs Mr. Anderson, if he should find strong difficulties impeding the partition, on the score of the subtraction of Biddenore, wholly to abandon that claim, and to conclude the treaty on the original terms. General Matthews's convention was just brought forward sufficiently to demonstrate to the Marattas the slippery hold which they had on their new confederate; on the other hand that convention being instantly abandoned, the people of India were taught, that no terms on which they can surrender to the Company are to be regarded, when farther conquests are in view.

Next, Sir, let me bring before you the pious care that was taken of our allies under that treaty which is the subject of the Company's applauses. These allies were Ragonaut Row, for whom we had engaged to find a throne; the Guickwar, (one of the Guzerat princes) who was to be emancipated from the Maratta authority, and to grow great by several accessions of dominion; and lastly, the Rana of Gohud, with whom we had entered into a treaty of partition for eleven sixteenths of our joint conquests. Some of these inestimable securities,

securities, called *vague* articles, were inserted in favour of them all.

As to the first, the unhappy abdicated Peshwa, and pretender to the Maratta throne, Ragonaut Row, was delivered up to his people, with an article for safety, and some provision. This man, knowing how little vague the hatred of his countrymen was towards him, and well apprised of what black crimes he stood accused (among which our invasion of his country would not appear the least) took a mortal alarm at the security we had provided for him. He was thunderstruck at the article in his favour, by which he was surrendered to his enemies. He never had the least notice of the treaty; and it was apprehended that he would fly to the protection of Hyder Ali, or some other, disposed or able to protect him. He was therefore not left without comfort; for Mr. Anderson did him the favour to send a special messenger, desiring him to be of good cheer and to fear nothing. And his old enemy, Scindia, at our request, sent him a message equally well calculated to quiet his apprehensions.

By the same treaty the Guickwar was to come again, with no better security, under the dominion of the Maratta state. As to the Rana of Gohud, a long negotiation depended for giving him up. At first this was refused by Mr. Hastings with great indignation; at another stage it was admitted as proper, because he had shewn himself a most perfidious person. But at length a method of reconciling these extremes was found out, by contriving one of the usual articles in his favour. What I believe will appear beyond all belief, Mr. Anderson exchanged the final ratifications of that treaty by which the Rana was nominally secured in his possessions, in the camp of the Maratta chief,

chief, Scindia, whilst he was (really, and not nominally) battering the castle of Gualior, which we had given, agreeably to treaty, to this deluded ally. Scindia had already reduced the town; and was at the very time, by various detachments, reducing, one after another, the fortresses of our protected ally, as well as in the act of chastising all the Rajahs who had assisted Colonel Camac in his invasion. I have seen in a letter from Calcutta, that the Rana of Gohud's agent would have represented these hostilities (which went hand in hand with the protecting treaty) to Mr. Hastings; but he was not admitted to his presence.

In this manner the Company has acted with their allies in the Maratta war. But they did not rest here: the Marattas were fearful lest the persons delivered to them by that treaty should attempt to escape into the British territories, and thus might elude the punishment intended for them, and by reclaiming the treaty, might stir up new disturbances. To prevent this, they desired an article to be inserted in the supplemental treaty, to which they had the ready consent of Mr. Hastings and the rest of the Company's representatives in Bengal. It was this, "That the English and Maratta governments mutually agree not to afford refuge to any *chiefs, merchants, or other persons*, flying for protection to the territories of the other." This was readily assented to, and assented to without any exception whatever, in favour of our surrendered allies. On their part a reciprocity was stipulated which was not unnatural for a government like the Company's to ask; a government, conscious that many subjects had been, and would in future, be driven to fly from its jurisdiction.

To complete the system of pacific intention  
and

and public faith, which predominate in these treaties, Mr. Hastings fairly resolved to put all peace, except on the terms of absolute conquest, wholly out of his own power. For, by an article in this second treaty with Scindia, he binds the Company not to make any peace with Tippoo Sahib, without the consent of the Peishwa of the Marattas ; and binds Scindia to him by a reciprocal engagement. The treaty between France and England obliges us mutually to withdraw our forces, if our allies in India do not accede to the peace within four months ; Mr. Hastings's treaty obliges us to continue the war as long as the Peishwa thinks fit. We are now in that happy situation, that the breach of the treaty with France, or the violation of that with the Marattas, is inevitable ; and we have only to take our choice.

My third assertion, relative to the abuse made of the right of war and peace is, that there are none who have ever confided in us who have not been utterly ruined. The examples I have given of Ragonaut Row, of Guickwar, of the Ranah of Gohud, are recent. There is proof more than enough in the condition of the Mogul ; in the slavery and indigence of the Nabob of Oude ; the exile of the Rajah of Benares ; the beggary of the Nabob of Bengal ; the undone and captive condition of the Rajah and kingdom of Tanjour ; the destruction of the Polygars ; and lastly, in the destruction of the Nabob of Arcot himself, who when his dominions were invaded was found entirely destitute of troops, provisions, stores, and (as he asserts) of money, being a million in debt to the Company, and four millions to others : the many millions which he had extorted from so many extirpated princes and their desolated countries

tries having (as he has frequently hinted) been expended for the ground-rent of his mansion-house in an alley in the suburbs of Madras. Compare the condition of all these princes with the power and authority of all the Maratta states; with the independence and dignity of the Soubah of the Decan; and the mighty strength, the resources, and the manly struggle of Hyder Ali; and then the House will discover the effects, on every power in India, of an easy confidence, or of a rooted distrust in the faith of the Company.

These are some of my reasons, grounded on the abuse of the external political trust of that body, for thinking myself not only justified but bound to declare against those chartered rights which produce so many wrongs. I should deem myself the wickedest of men, if any vote of mine could contribute to the continuance of so great an evil.

Now, Sir, according to the plan I proposed, I shall take notice of the Company's internal government, as it is exercised first on the dependent provinces, and then as it affects those under the direct and immediate authority of that body. And here, Sir, before I enter into the spirit of their interior government, permit me to observe to you, upon a few of the many lines of difference which are to be found between the vices of the Company's government, and those of the conquerors who preceded us in India; that we may be enabled a little the better to see our way in an attempt to the necessary reformation.

The several irruptions of Arabs, Tartars, and Persians, into India were, for the greater part, ferocious, bloody, and wasteful in the extreme: our entrance into the dominion of that country was, as generally, with small comparative effusion of blood; being introduced by various frauds

and delusions, and by taking advantage of the incurable, blind, and senseless animosity, which the several country powers bear towards each other, rather than by open force. But the difference in favour of the first conquerors is this; the Asiatic conquerors very soon abated of their ferocity, because they made the conquered country their own. They rose or fell with the rise or fall of the territory they lived in. Fathers there deposited the hopes of their posterity; and children there beheld the monuments of their fathers. Here their lot was finally cast; and it is the natural wish of all, that their lot should not be cast in a bad land. Poverty, sterility, and desolation, are not a recreating prospect to the eye of man; and there are very few who can bear to grow old among the curses of a whole people. If their passion or their avarice drove the Tartar lords to acts of rapacity or tyranny, there was time enough, even in the short life of man, to bring round the ill effects of an abuse of power upon the power itself. If hoards were made by violence and tyranny, they were still domestic hoards; and domestic profusion, or the rapine of a more powerful and prodigal hand, restored them to the people. With many disorders, and with few political checks upon power, Nature had still fair play; the sources of acquisition were not dried up; and therefore the trade, the manufactures, and the commerce of the country flourished. Even avarice and usury itself operated, both for the preservation and the employment of national wealth. The husbandman and manufacturer paid heavy interest, but then they augmented the fund from whence they were again to borrow. Their resources were dearly bought, but they were sure; and the general stock of the community grew by the general effort.

But under the English government all this order is reversed. The Tartar invasion was mischievous; but it is our protection that destroys India. It was their enmity, but it is our friendship. Our conquest there, after twenty years, is as crude as it was the first day. The natives scarcely know what it is to see the grey head of an Englishman. Young men (boys almost) govern there, without society, and without sympathy with the natives. They have no more social habits with the people, than if they still resided in England; nor indeed any species of intercourse but that which is necessary to making a sudden fortune, with a view to a remote settlement. Animated with all the avarice of age, and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another; wave after wave; and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is continually wasting. Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is lost for ever to India. With us are no retributory superstitions, by which a foundation of charity compensates, through ages, to the poor, for the rapine and injustice of a day. With us no pride erects stately monuments which repair the mischiefs which pride had produced, and which adorn a country out of its own spoils. England has erected no churches, no hospitals\*, no palaces, no schools; England has built no bridges, made no high roads, cut no navigations, dug out no reservoirs. Every other conqueror of every other description has left some monument, either of state

\* The paltry foundation at Calcutta is scarcely worth naming as an exception.

or beneficence, behind him. Were we to be driven out of India this day, nothing would remain, to tell that it had been possessed, during the inglorious period of our dominion, by any thing better than the ouran-outang or the tiger.

There is nothing in the boys we send to India worse than the boys whom we are whipping at school, or that we see trailing a pike, or bending over a desk at home. But as English youth in India drink the intoxicating draught of authority and dominion before their heads are able to bear it, and as they are full grown in fortune long before they are ripe in principle, neither nature nor reason have any opportunity to exert themselves for remedy of the excesses of their premature power. The consequences of their conduct, which in good minds, (and many of theirs are probably such) might produce penitence or amendment, are unable to pursue the rapidity of their flight. Their prey is lodged in England; and the cries of India are given to seas and winds, to be blown about, in every breaking-up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean. In India all the vices operate by which sudden fortune is acquired; in England are often displayed, by the same persons, the virtues which dispense hereditary wealth. Arrived in England, the destroyers of the nobility and gentry of a whole kingdom will find the best company in this nation, at a board of elegance and hospitality. Here the manufacturer and husbandman will bless the just and punctual hand, that in India has torn the cloth from the loom, or wrested the scanty portion of rice and salt from the peasant of Bengal, or wrung from him the very opium in which he forgot his oppressions and his oppressor. They marry into your families;  
they



they enter into your senate; they ease your estates by loans; they raise their value by demand; they cherish and protect your relations which lie heavy on your patronage; and there is scarcely an house in the kingdom that does not feel some concern and interest that makes all reform of our eastern government appear officious and disgusting; and, on the whole, a most discouraging attempt. In such an attempt you hurt those who are able to return kindness or to resent injury. If you succeed, you save those who cannot so much as give you thanks. All these things shew the difficulty of the work we have on hand: but they shew its necessity too. Our Indian government is in its best state a grievance. It is necessary that the correctives should be uncommonly vigorous; and the work of men sanguine, warm, and even impassioned in the cause. But it is an arduous thing to plead against abuses of a power which originates from your own country, and affects those whom we are used to consider as strangers.

I shall certainly endeavour to modulate myself to this temper; though I am sensible that a cold style of describing actions which appear to me in a very affecting light, is equally contrary to the justice due to the people, and to all genuine human feelings about them. I ask pardon of truth and nature for this compliance. But I shall be very sparing of epithets either to persons or things. It has been said (and, with regard to one of them, with truth) that Tacitus and Machiavel, by their cold way of relating enormous crimes, have in some sort appeared not to disapprove them; that they seem a sort of professors of the art of tyranny, and that they corrupt the minds of their readers by not expressing the detestation and horror that naturally belong to horrible and

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detestable

detestable proceedings. But we are in general, Sir, so little acquainted with Indian details; the instruments of oppression under which the people suffer are so hard to be understood; and even the very names of the sufferers are so uncouth and strange to our ears, that it is very difficult for our sympathy to fix upon these objects. I am sure that some of us have come down stairs from the committee-room, with impressions on our minds, which to us were the inevitable results of our discoveries, yet if we should venture to express ourselves in the proper language of our sentiments, to other gentlemen not at all prepared to enter into the cause of them, nothing could appear more harsh and dissonant, more violent and unaccountable, than our language and behaviour. All these circumstances are not, I confess, very favourable to the idea of our attempting to govern India at all. But there we are; there we are placed by the Sovereign Disposer: and we must do the best we can in our situation. The situation of man is the preceptor of his duty.

Upon the plan which I laid down, and to which I beg leave to return, I was considering the conduct of the Company to those nations which are indirectly subject to their authority. The most considerable of the dependent princes is the Nabob of Oude. \* My Right Honourable friend, to whom we owe the remedial bills on your table, has already pointed out to you, in one of the Reports, the condition of that prince, and as it stood in the time he alluded to. I shall only add a few circumstances that may tend to awaken some sense of the manner in which the condition of the people is affected by that of the prince, and

involved in it; and to shew you, that when we talk of the sufferings of princes, we do not lament the oppression of individuals; and that in these cases the high and the low suffer together.

In the year 1779 the Nabob of Oude represented, through the British resident at his court, that the number of Company's troops stationed in his dominions was a main cause of his distress; and that all those which he was not bound by treaty to maintain should be withdrawn, as they had greatly diminished his revenue, and impoverished his country. I will read you, if you please, a few extracts from these representations.

He states " that the country and cultivation " are abandoned; and this year in particular, from " the excessive drought of the season, deductions " of many lacks having been allowed to the farmers, who are still left unsatisfied;" and then he proceeds with a long detail of his own distress, and that of his family, and all his dependants; and adds, " that the new-raised brigade is not only " quite useless to my government, but is more- " over the cause of much loss, both in revenues and " customs. The detached body of troops under " European officers bring nothing *but confusion to* " *the affairs of my government; and are entirely* " *their own masters.*" Mr. Middleton, Mr. Hastings's confidential Resident, vouches for the truth of this representation in its fullest extent. " I " am concerned to confess, that there is too good " ground for this plea. *The misfortune has been* " *general throughout the whole of the Vizier's* [the " Nabob of Oude] *dominions, obvious to every* " *body; and so fatal have been its consequences,* " that no person, of either credit or character, " would enter into engagements with government

“for farming the country.” He then proceeds to give strong instances of the general calamity, and its effects.

It was now to be seen what steps the governor general and council took for the relief of this distressed country, long labouring under the vexations of men, and now stricken by the hand of God. The case of a general famine is known to relax the severity even of the most rigorous government.—Mr. Hastings does not deny, or shew the least doubt of the fact. The representation is humble, and almost abject. On this representation from a great prince, of the distress of his subjects, Mr. Hastings falls into a violent passion; such as (it seems) would be unjustifiable in any one who speaks of any part of *his* conduct. He declares “that the *demands*, the *tone* in which they were asserted, and the *season* in which they were made, are “allegedly alarming, and appear to him to require “an adequate degree of firmness in this board, in “*opposition* to them.” He proceeds to deal out very unreserved language, on the person and character of the Nabob and his ministers. He declares, that in a division between him and the Nabob, “*the strongest must decide.*” With regard to the urgent and instant necessity, from the failure of the crops, he says, “that *perhaps expedients may be found* for affording a *gradual* “relief from the burthen of which he so heavily “complains, and it shall be my endeavour to “seek them out:” and, lest he should be suspected of too much haste to alleviate sufferings, and to remove violence, he says, “that these “must be *gradually* applied, and their complete “*effect* may be *distant*; and this I conceive *is all* “he can claim of right.”

This

This complete effect of his lenity is distant indeed. Rejecting this demand (as he calls the Nabob's abject supplication) he attributes it, as he usually does all things of the kind, to the division in their government; and says, "this is a powerful motive with *me* (however inclined I might be, *upon any other occasion*, to yield to some part of his demand) to give them an *absolute and unconditional refusal* upon the present; and even to bring to punishment, if my influence can produce that effect, those incendiaries who have endeavoured to make themselves the instruments of division between us."

Here, Sir, is much heat and passion; but no more consideration of the distress of the country, from a failure of the means of subsistence, and (if possible) the worse evil of an useless and licentious soldiery, than if they were the most contemptible of all trifles. A letter is written in consequence, in such a style of lofty despotism, as I believe has hitherto been unexampled and unheard of in the records of the East. The troops were continued. The *gradual* relief, whose effect was to be so *distant*, has *never* been substantially and beneficially applied—and the country is ruined.

Mr. Hastings, two years after, when it was too late, saw the absolute necessity of a removal of the intolerable grievance of this licentious soldiery, which, under a pretence of defending it, held the country under military execution. A new treaty and arrangement, according to the pleasure of Mr. Hastings, took place; and this new treaty was broken in the old manner, in every essential article. The soldiery were again sent, and again set loose. The effect of all his manoeuvres, from which it seems he was sanguine

enough to entertain hopes, upon the state of the country, he himself informs us, " the event has  
 " proved the *reverse* of these hopes, and *accumu-*  
 " *lation of distress, debasement, and dissatisfaction*  
 " to the Nabob, and *disappointment and disgrace*  
 " *to me.*—Every measure [which he had himself  
 proposed] has been *so conducted* as to give him  
 " cause of displeasure; there are no officers esta-  
 " blished by which his affairs could be regularly  
 " conducted; mean, incapable, and indigent men  
 " have been appointed. A number of the dis-  
 " tricts without authority, and without the means  
 " of personal protection; some of them have  
 " been murdered by the Zemindars, and those  
 " Zemindars, instead of punishment, have been  
 " permitted to retain their Zemindaries, with in-  
 " dependent authority; *all* the other Zemindars  
 " suffered to rise up in rebellion, and to insult  
 " the authority of the Sircar, without any at-  
 " tempt made to suppress them; and the Com-  
 " pany's debt, instead of being discharged by the  
 " assignments and extraordinary sources of money  
 " provided for that *purpose, is likely to exceed*  
 " *even the amount at which it stood at the time*  
 " *in which the arrangement with his Excellency*  
 " *was concluded.*" The House will smile at the  
 resource on which the Directors take credit as such  
 a certainty in their curious account.

This is Mr. Hastings's own narrative of the effects of his own settlement. This is the state of the country which we have been told is in perfect peace and order; and, what is curious, he informs us, that *every part of this was foretold to him in the order and manner in which it happened*, at the very time he made his arrangement of men and measures.

The

The invariable course of the Company's policy is this: Either they set up some prince too odious to maintain himself without the necessity of their assistance; or they soon render him odious, by making him the instrument of their government. In that case troops are bountifully sent to him to maintain his authority. That he should have no want of assistance, a civil gentleman, called a Resident, is kept at his court, who, under pretence of providing duly for the pay of these troops, gets assignments on the revenue into his hands. Under his provident management, debts soon accumulate; new assignments are made for these debts; until, step by step, the whole revenue, and with it the whole power of the country, is delivered into his hands. The military do not behold without a virtuous emulation the moderate gains of the civil department. They feel that, in a country driven to habitual rebellion by the civil government, the military is necessary; and they will not permit their services to go unrewarded. Tracts of country are delivered over to their discretion. Then it is found proper to convert their commanding officers into farmers of revenue. Thus, between the well paid civil, and well rewarded military establishment, the situation of the natives may be easily conjectured. The authority of the regular and lawful government is every where and in every point extinguished. Disorders and violences arise; they are repressed by other disorders and other violences. Wherever the collectors of the revenue, and the farming colonels and majors move, ruin is about them, rebellion before and behind them. The people in crowds fly out of the country; and the frontier is guarded by lines of troops, not to exclude an enemy,

enemy, but to prevent the escape of the inhabitants.

By these means, in the course of not more than four or five years, this once opulent and flourishing country, which, by the accounts given in the Bengal consultations, yielded more than three crore of Sicca rupees, that is, above three millions sterling, annually, is reduced, as far as I can discover, in a matter purposely involved in the utmost perplexity, to less than one million three hundred thousand pounds, and that exacted by every mode of rigour that can be devised. To complete the business, most of the wretched remnants of this revenue are mortgaged, and delivered into the hands of the usurers at Benares (for there alone are to be found some lingering remains of the ancient wealth of these regions) at an interest of near *thirty per cent. per annum.*

The revenues in this manner failing, they seized upon the estates of every person of eminence in the country, and, under the name of *resumption*, confiscated their property. I wish, Sir, to be understood universally and literally, when I assert, that there is not left one man of property and substance for his rank, in the whole of these provinces, in provinces which are nearly the extent of England and Wales taken together. Not one landholder, not one banker, not one merchant, not one even of those who usually perish last, the *ultimum moriens* in a ruined state, no one farmer or revenue.

One country for a while remained, which stood as an island in the midst of the grand waste of the Company's dominion. My Right Honourable friend, in his admirable speech on moving the bill, just touched the situation, the offences, and the punishment, of a native prince, called

Fizulla



Fizulla Khân. This man, by policy and force, had protected himself from the general extirpation of the Rohilla chiefs. He was secured (if that were any security) by a treaty. It was stated to you, as it was stated by the enemies of that unfortunate man—"that the whole of his country " *is* what the whole country of the Rohillas *was*, " cultivated like a garden, without one neglected " spot in it."—Another accuser says, "Fyzoolah " Khan though a bad soldier [that is the true " source of his misfortune] has approved himself a " good aumil; having, it is supposed, in the course " of a few years, at least *doubled* the population, " and revenue of his country."—In another part of the correspondence he is charged with making his country an asylum for the oppressed peasants, who fly from the territories of Oude. The improvement of his revenue, arising from this single crime, (which Mr. Hastings considers as tantamount to treason) is stated at an hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year.

Dr. Swift somewhere says, that he who could make two blades of grass grow where but one grew before, was a greater benefactor to the human race than all the politicians that ever existed. This prince, who would have been deified by antiquity, who would have been ranked with Osiris, and Bacchus, and Ceres, and the divinities most propitious to men, was, for those very merits, by name attacked by the Company's government, as a cheat, a robber, a traitor. In the same breath in which he was accused as a rebel, he was ordered at once to furnish 5,000 horse. On delay, or (according to the technical phrase, when any remonstrance is made to them) "*on evasion*," he was declared a violator of treaties, and every thing he had was to be taken from him.

him.—Not one word, however, of horse in this treaty.

The territory of this Fizulla Khân, Mr. Speaker, is less than the county of Norfolk. It is an inland country, full seven hundred miles from any sea port, and not distinguished for any one considerable branch of manufacture whatsoever. From this territory a punctual payment was made to the British Resident of £. 150,000 sterling a year. The demand of cavalry, without a shadow or decent pretext of right, amounted to three hundred thousand a year more, at the lowest computation; and it is stated, by the last person sent to negotiate, as a demand of little use, if it could be complied with; but that the compliance was impossible, as it amounted to more than his territories could supply, if there had been no other demand upon him—four hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year from an inland country not so large as Norfolk!

The thing most extraordinary was to hear the culprit defend himself from the imputation of his virtues, as if they had been the blackest offences. He extenuated the superior cultivation of his country. He denied its population. He endeavoured to prove that he had often sent back the poor peasant that sought shelter with him.—I can make no observation on this.

After a variety of extortions and vexations, too fatiguing to you, too disgusting to me, to go through with, they found “that they ought to be in a better state to warrant forcible means;” they therefore contented themselves with a gross sum of 150,000 pounds, for their present demand. They offered him indeed an indemnity from their  
exactions

exactions in future, for three hundred thousand pounds more. But he refused to buy their securities; pleading (probably with truth) his poverty: but if the plea were not founded, in my opinion very wisely; not choosing to deal any more in that dangerous commodity of the Company's faith; and thinking it better to oppose distress and unarmed obstinacy to uncoloured exaction, than to subject himself to be considered as a cheat, if he should make a treaty in the least beneficial to himself. Thus they executed an exemplary punishment on Fizulla Khân for the culture of his country. But, conscious that the prevention of evils is the great object of all good regulation, they deprived him of the means of encreasing that criminal cultivation in future, by exhausting his coffers; and, that the population of his country should no more be a standing reproach and libel on the Company's government, they bound him, by a positive engagement, not to afford any shelter whatsoever to the farmers and labourers who should seek refuge in his territories, from the exactions of the British Residents in Oude. When they had done all this effectually, they gave him a full and complete acquittance from all charges of rebellion, or of any intention to rebel, or of his having originally had any interest in, or any means of rebellion.

These intended rebellions are one of the Company's standing resources. When money has been thought to be heaped up any where, its owners are universally accused of rebellion, until they are acquitted of their money and their treasons at once. The money once taken, all accusation, trial, and punishment ends. It is so settled a resource, that I rather wonder how it comes to be omitted in the Directors account; but

but I take it for granted this omission will be supplied in their next edition. The Company stretched this resource to the full extent, when they accused two old women, in the remotest corner of India (who could have no possible view or motive to raise disturbances) of being engaged in rebellion, with an intent to drive out the English nation in whose protection, purchased by money and secured by treaty, rested the sole hope of their existence. But the Company wanted money, and the old women *must* be guilty of a plot. They were accused of rebellion, and they were convicted of wealth. Twice had great sums been extorted from them, and as often had the British faith guaranteed the remainder. A body of British troops, with one of the military farmers general at their head, was sent to seize upon the castle in which these helpless women resided. Their chief eunuchs, who were their agents, their guardians, protectors, persons of high rank according to the Eastern manners and of great trust, were thrown into dungeons, to make them discover their hidden treasures; and there they lie at present. The lands assigned for the maintenance of the women were seized and confiscated. Their jewels and effects were taken, and set up to a pretended auction in an obscure place, and bought at such a price as the gentlemen thought proper to give. No account has ever been transmitted of the articles or produce of this sale. What money was obtained is unknown, or what terms were stipulated for the maintenance of these despoiled and forlorn creatures; for by some particulars it appears as if an engagement of the kind was made.

Let me here remark, once for all, that though  
the

the act of 1773 requires that an account of all proceedings should be diligently transmitted, that this, like all the other injunctions of the law, is totally despised ; and that half at least of the most important papers are intentionally withheld.

I wish you, Sir, to advert particularly, in this transaction, to the quality and the numbers of the persons spoiled, and the instrument by whom that spoil was made. These ancient matrons called the Begums or Princesses, were of the first birth and quality in India, the one mother, the other wife, of the late Nabob of Oude, Sujah Dowlah, a prince possessed of extensive and flourishing dominions, and the second man in the Mogul empire. This prince (suspicious, and not unjustly suspicious, of his son and successor) at his death committed his treasures and his family to the British faith. That family and household, consisted of *two thousand women* ; to which were added two other seraglios of near kindred, and said to be extremely numerous, and (as I am well informed) of about fourscore of the Nabob's children, with all the eunuchs, the ancient servants, and a multitude of the dependants of his splendid court. These were all to be provided, for present maintenance and future establishment, from the lands assigned as dower, and from the treasures which he left to these matrons, in trust for the whole family.

So far as to the objects of the spoil. The *instrument* chosen by Mr. Hastings to despoil the relict of Sujah Dowlah was *her own son*, the reigning Nabob of Oude. It was the pious hand of a son that was selected to tear from his mother and grandmother the provision of their age, the maintenance of his brethren, and of all.

all the ancient household of his father. [Here a laugh from some young members]—The laugh is *seasonable*, and the occasion decent and proper.

By the last advices something of the sum extorted remained unpaid. The women in despair refuse to deliver more, unless their lands are restored and their ministers released from prison : but Mr. Hastings and his council, steady to their point, and consistent to the last in their conduct, write to the Resident to stimulate the son to accomplish the filial acts he had brought so near to their perfection.—“ We desire,” say they in their letter to the Resident (written so late as March last) “ that you will inform us if any, and what means, have been taken for recovering the balance due from the Begum [Princess] at Fizabad; and that, if necessary, you *recommend* it to the Vizier to enforce *the most effectual means* for that purpose.”

What their effectual means of enforcing demands on women of high rank and condition are, I shall shew you, Sir, in a few minutes; when I represent to you another of these plots and rebellions, which *always*, in India, though so *rarely* any where else, are the offspring of an easy condition, and hoarded riches.

Benares is the capital city of the Indian religion. It is regarded as holy by a particular and distinguished sanctity; and the Gentils in general think themselves as much obliged to visit it once in their lives as the Mahometans to perform their pilgrimage to Mecca. By this means that city grew great in commerce and opulence; and so effectually was it secured by the pious veneration  
of

of that people, that in all wars and in all violences of power, there was so sure an asylum, both for poverty and wealth, (as it were under a divine protection) that the wisest laws and best assured free constitution could not better provide for the relief of the one, or the safety of the other; and this tranquillity influenced to the greatest degree the prosperity of all the country, and the territory of which it was the capital. The interest of money there was not more than half the usual rate in which it stood in all other places. The reports have fully informed you of the means and of the terms in which this city and the territory called Gazipour, of which it was the head, came under the sovereignty of the East India Company.

If ever there was a subordinate dominion pleasantly circumstanced to the superior power, it was this; a large rent or tribute, to the amount of two hundred and sixty thousand pounds a year, was paid in monthly instalments with the punctuality of a dividend at the Bank. If ever there was a prince who could not have an interest in disturbances, it was its sovereign, the Rajah Cheit Sing. He was in possession of the capital of his religion, and a willing revenue was paid by the devout people who resorted to him from all parts. His sovereignty and his independence, except his tribute, was secured by every tie. His territory was not much less than half of Ireland, and displayed in all parts a degree of cultivation, ease, and plenty, under his frugal and paternal management, which left him nothing to desire, either for honour or satisfaction.

This was the light in which this country appeared to almost every eye. But Mr. Hastings beheld it askance. Mr. Hastings tells us that it

was reported of this Cheit Sing, that his father left him a million sterling, and that he made annual accessions to the hoard. Nothing could be so obnoxious to indigent power. So much wealth could not be innocent. The House is fully acquainted with the unfounded and unjust requisitions which were made upon this prince. The question has been most ably and conclusively cleared up in one of the Reports of the Select Committee, and is an answer of the Court of Directors to an extraordinary publication against them by their servant, Mr. Hastings. But I mean to pass by these exactions, as if they were perfectly just and regular; and, having admitted them, I take what I shall now trouble you with, only as it serves to shew the spirit of the Company's government, the mode in which it is carried on, and the maxims on which it proceeds.

Mr. Hastings, from whom I take the doctrine, endeavours to prove that Cheit Sing was no sovereign prince; but a mere Zemindar or common subject, holding land by rent. If this be granted to him, it is next to be seen under what terms he is of opinion such a land-holder, that is a British subject, holds his life and property under the Company's government. It is proper to understand well the doctrines of the person whose administration has lately received such distinguished approbation from the Company. His doctrine is —“ that the Company, or the *person delegated by it*, “ holds an *absolute* authority over such Zemindars; “ —that he [such a subject] owes an *implicit* and “ *unreserved* obedience to its authority, at the “ *forfeiture* even of his *life* and *property*, at the “ DISCRETION of those who held or *fully represented* “ the sovereign authority;—and that *these* rights “ are *fully delegated to him* Mr. Hastings.”

Such



Such is a British governor's idea of the condition of a great Zemindar holding under a British authority; and this kind of authority he supposes fully delegated to *him*; though no such delegation appears in any commission, instruction, or act of parliament. At his *discretion* he may demand, of the substance of any Zemindar over and above his rent or tribute, even what he pleases, with a sovereign authority; and if he does not yield an *implicit unreserved* obedience to all his commands, he forfeits his lands, his life, and his property, at Mr. Hastings's *discretion*. But, extravagant and even frantic as these positions appear, they are less so than what I shall now read to you; for he asserts, that if any one should urge an exemption from more than a stated payment, or should consider the deeds, which passed between him and the board, "as bearing *the quality* " *and force* of a treaty between equal states," he says, "that such an opinion is itself criminal to the state of which he is a subject; and that he was himself amenable to its justice, if he gave *countenance* to such a *belief*." Here is a new species of crime invented, that of countenancing a belief—but a belief of what? A belief of that which the Court of Directors, Hastings's masters, and a Committee of this House, have decided as this prince's indisputable right.

But supposing the Rajah of Benares to be a mere subject, and that subject a criminal of the highest form; let us see what course was taken by an upright English magistrate. Did he cite this culprit before his tribunal? Did he make a charge? Did he produce witnesses? These are not forms; they are parts of substantial and eternal justice. No, not a word of all this. Mr. Hastings concludes him, *in his own mind*, to be

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guilty;

guilty; he makes this conclusion on reports, on hear-says, on appearances, on rumours, on conjectures, on presumptions; and even these never once hinted to the party, nor publicly to any human being, till the whole business was done.

But the governor tells you his motive for this extraordinary proceeding, so contrary to every mode of justice towards either a prince or a subject, fairly and without disguise; and he puts into your hands the key of his whole conduct:—"I will suppose, for a moment, that I have acted with unwarrantable rigour towards Cheir Sing, and even with injustice.—Let my MOTIVE be confessed. I left Calcutta, impressed with a belief that *extraordinary means* were necessary, and those exerted with a *steady hand*, to preserve the Company's *interests from sinking under the accumulated weight which oppressed them*. I saw a *political necessity* for curbing the *overgrown* power of a great member of their dominion, and for *making it contribute to the relief of their pressing exigencies*." This is plain speaking; after this, it is no wonder that the Rajah's wealth and his offence, the necessities of the judge, and the opulence of the delinquent, are never separated, through the whole of Mr. Hastings's apology. "The justice and *policy* of exacting a *large pecuniary mulct*." The resolution "to draw from *his guilt* the means of *relief to the Company's distresses*." His determination "to make him *pay largely* for his pardon, or to execute a severe vengeance for past delinquency." That "as his *wealth was great*, and the *Company's exigencies* pressing, he thought it a measure of justice and policy to exact from him a large pecuniary mulct for *their relief*."—"The sum (says Mr. Wheler, bearing evidence, at his desire, to his intentions)

" to

“ to which the governor declared his resolution  
 “ to extend his fine, was forty or fifty lacks, *that is*  
 “ *four or five hundred thousand pounds* ; and that if  
 “ he refused, he was to be removed from his ze-  
 “ mindary entirely ; or by taking possession of his  
 “ forts, to obtain, *out of the treasure deposited in*  
 “ *them*, the above sum for the Company.”

Crimes so convenient, crimes so politic, crimes  
 so necessary, crimes so alleviating of distress, can  
 never be wanting to those who use no process, and  
 who produce no proofs.

But there is another serious part (what is not  
 so?) in this affair. Let us suppose that the power,  
 for which Mr. Hastings contends, a power which  
 no sovereign ever did, or ever can vest in any of  
 his subjects, namely, his own sovereign authority,  
 to be conveyed by the act of parliament to any  
 man or body of men whatsoever ; it certainly was  
 never given to Mr. Hastings. The powers given  
 by the act of 1773 were formal and official ; they  
 were given, not to the governor general, but to  
 the major vote of the board, as a board, on dis-  
 cussion amongst themselves, in their public cha-  
 racter and capacity ; and their acts in that charac-  
 ter and capacity were to be ascertained by re-  
 cords and minutes of council. The despotic acts  
 exercised by Mr. Hastings were done merely in his  
*private* character ; and, if they had been moderate  
 and just, would still be the acts of an usurped au-  
 thority, and without any one of the legal modes of  
 proceeding which could give him competence  
 for the most trivial exertion of power. There was  
 no proposition or deliberation whatsoever in coun-  
 cil, no minute on record, by circulation or other-  
 wise, to authorize his proceedings. No delega-  
 tion of power to impose a fine, or to take any step

to deprive the Rajah of Benares of his government, his property, or his liberty. The minutes of consultation assign to his journey a totally different object, duty, and destination. Mr. Wheeler, at his desire, tells us long after, that he had a confidential conversation with him on various subjects, of which this was the principal, in which Mr. Hastings notified to him his secret intentions; "and that he *bespoke* his support of the measures "which he intended to pursue towards him (the "Rajah.)" This confidential discourse, and *bespeaking* of support, could give him no power, in opposition to an express act of parliament, and the whole tenor of the orders of the Court of Directors.

In what manner the powers thus usurped were employed, is known to the whole world. All the House knows, that the design on the Rajah proved as unfruitful as it was violent. The unhappy prince was expelled, and his more unhappy country was enslaved and ruined; but not a rupee was acquired. Instead of treasure to recruit the Company's finances, wasted by their wanton wars and corrupt jobbs, they were plunged into a new war, which shook their power in India to its foundation; and, to use the governor's own happy simile, might have dissolved it like a magic structure, if the talisman had been broken.

But the success is no part of my consideration, who should think just the same of this business, if the spoil of one Rajah had been fully acquired, and faithfully applied to the destruction of twenty other Rajahs. Not only the arrest of the Rajah in his palace was unnecessary and unwarrantable, and calculated to stir up any manly blood which remained in his subjects; but the despotic style,  
and

and the extreme insolence of language and demeanour, used to a person of great condition among the politest people in the world, was intolerable. Nothing aggravates tyranny so much as contumely. *Quicquid superbia in contumeliis* was charged by a great man of antiquity, as a principal head of offence against the governor general of that day. The unhappy people were still more insulted. A relation, but an *enemy* to the family, a notorious robber and villain, called Ustann Sing, kept as a hawk in a mew, to fly upon this nation, was set up to govern there, instead of a prince honoured and beloved. But when the business of insult was accomplished, the revenue was too serious a concern to be entrusted to such hands. Another was set up in his place, as guardian to an infant.

But here, Sir, mark the effect of all these *extraordinary* means, of all this policy and justice. The revenues which had been hitherto paid with such astonishing punctuality, fell into arrear. The new prince guardian was deposed without ceremony; and with as little, cast into prison. The government of that once happy country has been in the utmost confusion ever since such good order was taken about it. But, to complete the contumely offered to this undone people, and to make them feel their servitude in all its degradation, and all its bitterness, the government of their sacred city, the government of that Benares which had been so respected by Persian and Tartar conquerors, though of the Mussulman persuasion, that, even in the plenitude of their pride, power, and bigotry, no magistrate of that sect entered the place, was now delivered over

by English hands to a Mahometan ; and an Ali Ibrahim Khân was introduced, under the Company's authority, with power of life and death, into the sanctuary of the Gentû religion.

After this, the taking off a slight payment, cheerfully made by pilgrims to a chief of their own rites, was represented as a mighty benefit. It remains only to shew, through the conduct in this business, the spirit of the Company's government, and the respect they pay towards other prejudices not less regarded in the East than those of religion ; I mean the reverence paid to the female sex in general, and particularly to women of high rank and condition. During the general confusion of the country of Gazypore, Panna, the mother of Cheit Sing, was lodged with her train in a castle called Bidgé Gur, in which were likewise deposited a large portion of the treasures of her son, or more probably her own. To whomsoever they belonged was indifferent ; for, though no charge of rebellion was made on this woman (which was rather singular, as it would have cost nothing) they were resolved to secure her with her fortune. The castle was besieged by Major Popham.

There was no great reason to apprehend that soldiers ill paid, that soldiers who thought they had been defrauded of their plunder on former services of the same kind, would not have been sufficiently attentive to the spoil they were expressly come for ; but the gallantry and generosity of the profession was justly suspected, as being likely to set bounds to military rapaciousness. The Company's first civil magistrate discovered the greatest uneasiness lest the women should have any thing preserved to them. Terms,  
tending

tending to put some restraint on military violence; were granted. He writes a letter to Mr. Popham, referring to some letter written before to the same effect, which I do not remember to have seen; but it shews his anxiety on this subject. Hear himself:—"I think *every* demand she has made on you, except that of safety and respect to her person, is unreasonable. If the reports brought to me are true, your rejecting her offers, or *any negotiation*, would soon ob-  
 "tain you the fort upon your own terms. I apprehend she will attempt to *defraud the captors of a considerable part of their booty, by being suffered to retire without examination.*  
 "But this is your concern, not mine. I should be *very sorry* that your officers and soldiers lost any part of the reward to which they are so well entitled; but you must be the best judge of the *promised* indulgence to the Ranny: what you have engaged for I will certainly ratify; but as to suffering the Ranny to hold the purgunna of Hurlich, or any other zemindary, without being subject to the authority of the Zemindar, or *any lands whatsoever*, or indeed making any condition with her for a *provision*, I will never consent."

Here your governor stimulates a rapacious and licentious soldiery to the personal search of women, lest these unhappy creatures should avail themselves of the protection of their sex to secure any supply for their necessities; and he positively orders that no stipulation should be made for any provision for them. The widow and mother of a prince, well informed of her miserable situation, and the cause of it; a woman of this rank became

a suppliant to the domestic servant of Mr. Hastings (they are his own words that I read);  
 “ imploring his intercession, that she may be relieved *from the hardships and dangers of her present situation*; and offering to surrender the fort,  
 “ and the *treasure and valuable effects* contained in  
 “ it, provided she can be assured of *safety and*  
 “ *protection to her person and honour*, and to that  
 “ of her family and attendants.” He is so good as to consent to this, “ provided she surrenders every thing of value, with the reserve *only*  
 “ of such articles as *you* shall think *necessary* to  
 “ her condition, or as *you yourself* shall be disposed  
 “ to indulge her with.—But should she refuse to  
 “ execute the promise she has made, or delay it  
 “ beyond the term of twenty-four hours, it is *my*  
 “ *positive* injunction, that you immediately put a  
 “ stop to any further intercourse or negotiation  
 “ with her, and on no pretext renew it. If she  
 “ disappoints or *trifles* with me, after I have sub-  
 “ jected *my Duan* to the disgrace of returning  
 “ ineffectually, and of course myself to discredit;  
 “ I shall consider it as a *wanton* affront and in-  
 “ dignity *which I can never forgive*; nor will I  
 “ grant her *any* conditions whatever, but leave  
 “ her exposed *to those* dangers which she has  
 “ chosen to risque, rather than trust to the cle-  
 “ mency and generosity of our government. I  
 “ think she cannot be ignorant of these conse-  
 “ quences, and will not venture to incur them;  
 “ and it is for this reason I place a dependance  
 “ on her offers, and have consented to send my  
 “ Duan to her.” The dreadful secret hinted at  
 by the merciful governor in the latter part of the  
 letter, is well understood in India; where those who  
 suffer



suffer corporeal indignities, generally expiate the offences of others with their own blood. However, in spite of all these, the temper of the military did, some way or other, operate. They came to terms which have never been transmitted. It appears that a fifteenth *per cent.* of the plunder was reserved to the captives, of which the unhappy mother of the prince of Benares was to have a share. This antient matron, born to better things [a laugh from certain young gentlemen]—I see no cause for this mirth. A good author of antiquity reckons among the calamities of his time, *Nobilissimarum familiarum exilia et fugas.* I say, Sir, this antient lady was compelled to quit her house with three hundred helpless women, and a multitude of children in her train; but the lower sort in the camp it seems could not be restrained. They did not forget the good lessons of the governor general. They were unwilling “to be defrauded of a considerable part of their booty, by suffering them “to pass without examination.”—They examined them, Sir, with a vengeance, and the sacred protection of that awful character, Mr. Hastings’s maitre d’hotel, could not secure them from insult and plunder. Here is Popham’s narrative of the affair:—“The Ranny came out of the fort, “with her family and dependants, the 10th at “night, owing to which such attention was not “paid to her as I wished; and I am exceedingly “sorry to inform you, that the *licentiousness* of “our followers was beyond the bounds of con- “troul; for, notwithstanding all I could do, her “people were plundered on the road of most of “the things which they brought out of the fort, “by which means one of the articles of surrender  
“has

“ *has been much infringed.* The distress I have  
 “ felt upon this occasion cannot be expressed, and  
 “ can only be allayed by a firm performance of  
 “ the other articles of the treaty, which I shall  
 “ make it my business to enforce.

“ The suspicions which the officers had of trea-  
 “ chery, and the delay made to our getting pos-  
 “ session, had enraged them, as well as the troops,  
 “ so much, that the treaty was at first regarded  
 “ as void, but this determination was soon suc-  
 “ ceeded by pity and compassion for the unfor-  
 “ tunate besieged.”—After this comes, in his due  
 order, Mr. Hastings; who is full of sorrow and  
 indignation, &c. &c. &c. according to the best  
 and most authentic precedents established upon  
 such occasions.

The women being thus disposed of, that is,  
 completely despoiled, and pathetically lament-  
 ed, Mr. Hastings at length recollected the great  
 object of his enterprize, which, during his zeal  
 lest the officers and soldiers should lose any part of  
 their reward, he seems to have forgot; that is to  
 say, “ to draw from the Rajah’s guilt the means  
 “ of relief to the Company’s distresses.” This  
 was to be the strong hold of his defence. This  
 compassion to the Company, he knew by expe-  
 rience would sanctify a great deal of rigour to-  
 wards the natives. But the military had distresses  
 of their own, which they considered first. Neither  
 Mr. Hastings’s authority, nor his supplications,  
 could prevail on them to assign a shilling to the  
 claim he made on the part of the Company.  
 They divided the booty amongst themselves.  
 Driven from his claim he was reduced to petition  
 for the spoil as a loan. But the soldiers were too  
 wise

wife to venture as a loan, what the borrower claimed as a right. In defiance of all authority, they shared amongst themselves about two hundred thousand pounds sterling, besides what had been taken from the women.

In all this there is nothing wonderful. We may rest assured, that when the maxims of any government establish among its resources extraordinary means, and those exerted with a strong hand, that strong hand will provide those extraordinary means for *itself*. Whether the foldiers had reason or not (perhaps much might be said for them) certain it is, the military discipline of India was ruined from that moment; and the same rage for plunder, the same contempt of subordination, which blasted all the hopes of extraordinary means from your strong hand at Benares, have very lately lost you an army in Myfore. This is visible enough from the accounts in the last Gazette.

There is no doubt but that the country and city of Benares, now brought into the same order, will very soon exhibit, if it does not already display the same appearance with those countries and cities which are under better subjection. A great master, Mr. Hastings, has himself been at the pains of drawing a picture of one of these countries, I mean the province and city of Faruckabad. There is no reason to question his knowledge of the facts; and his authority (on this point at least) is above all exception, as well for the state of the country, as for the cause. In his minute of consultation, Mr. Hastings describes forcibly the consequences which arise from the degradation into which we have sunk the native government. " The total want (says he) of all  
" order,

“ order, regularity, or authority, in his (the Nabob  
 “ of Farruckabad’s) government, and to which,  
 “ among other obvious causes, it may no doubt  
 “ be owing that the country of Farruckabad is  
 “ become *almost an entire waste, without culti-*  
 “ *vation or inhabitants*; that the capital, which,  
 “ but a very short time ago, was distinguished as  
 “ one of the most populous and opulent com-  
 “ mercial cities in Hindostan, at present exhibits  
 “ nothing but *scenes of the most wretched poverty,*  
 “ *desolation, and misery*; and that the Nabob  
 “ *himself*, tho’ in the possession of a tract of country  
 “ which, with only common care, is notoriously  
 “ capable of yielding an annual revenue of be-  
 “ tween thirty and forty lacks, (three or four  
 “ hundred thousand pounds) with *no military*  
 “ *establishment* to maintain, scarcely commands  
 “ *the means of a bare subsistence.*”

This is a true and unexaggerated picture, not  
 only of Farruckabad, but of at least three-fourths  
 of the country which we possess, or rather lay  
 waste, in India. Now, Sir, the House will be de-  
 sirous to know for what purpose this picture  
 was drawn. It was for a purpose, I will not say  
 laudable, but necessary, that of taking the un-  
 fortunate Prince and his country out of the hands  
 of a sequestrator sent thither by the Nabob of  
 Oude, the mortal enemy of the Prince thus  
 ruined, and to protect him by means of a  
 British Resident, who might carry his complaints  
 to the superior Resident at Oude, or transmit them  
 to Calcutta. But mark, how the reformer per-  
 sisted in his reformation. The effect of the mea-  
 sure was better than was probably expected.  
 The Prince began to be at ease; the country  
 began to recover; and the revenue began to be  
 collected

collected. These were alarming circumstances. Mr. Hastings not only recalled the Resident, but he entered into a formal stipulation with the Nabob of Oude, never to send an English subject again to Farruckabad; and thus the country, described as you have heard by Mr. Hastings, is given up for ever to the very persons to whom he had attributed its ruin, that is to the Sezawals or sequestrators of the Nabob of Oude.

Such was the issue of the first attempt to relieve the distresses of the dependent provinces. I shall close what I have to say on the condition of the northern dependencies, with the effect of the last of these attempts. You will recollect, Sir, the account I have not long ago stated to you as given by Mr. Hastings, of the ruined condition of the destroyer of others, the Nabob of Oude, and of the recal, in consequence, of Hannay, Middleton, and Johnson. When the first little sudden gust of passion against these gentlemen was spent, the sentiments of old friendship began to revive. Some healing conferences were held between them and the superior government. Mr. Hannay was permitted to return to Oude; but death prevented the further advantages intended for him, and the future benefits proposed for the country by the provident care of the council general.

These three gentlemen were accused of the grossest peculations. The Court of Directors were informed, by the governor general and council, that a severe enquiry would be instituted against the two survivors; and they requested that court to suspend its judgment, and to wait the event of their proceedings. But no enquiry has been instituted, nor any steps taken towards it. By means of the bland and conciliatory dispositions of the charter  
governors,

governors, and proper private explanations, the public enquiry has died away, the supposed peculators and destroyers of Oude repose in all security in the bosoms of their accusers ; whilst others succeed to them to be instructed by their example.

It is only to complete the view I proposed of the conduct of the Company, with regard to the dependent provinces, that I shall say *any* thing at all of the Carnatic, which is the scene, if possible, of greater disorder than the northern provinces. Perhaps it were better to say of this center and metropolis of abuse, whence all the rest in India and in England diverge ; from whence they are fed and methodized, what was said of Carthage—*de Carthagine satius est filere quam parum dicere*. This country, in all its denominations, is about 46,000 square miles. It may be affirmed universally, that not one person of substance or property, landed, commercial, or monied, excepting two or three bankers, who are necessary deposits and distributors of the general spoil, is left in all that region. In that country the moisture, the bounty of Heaven, is given but at a certain season. Before the æra of our influence, the industry of man carefully husbanded that gift of God. The Gentûs preserved, with a provident and religious care, the precious deposit of the periodical rain in reservoirs, many of them works of royal grandeur ; and from these, as occasion demanded, they fructified the whole country. To maintain these reservoirs, and to keep up an annual advance to the cultivators, for seed and cattle, formed a principal object of the piety and policy of the priests and rulers of the Gentû religion.

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This object required a command of money ; and there was no Pollam, or castle, which in the happy days of the Carnatic was without some hoard of treasure, by which the governors were enabled to combat with the irregularity of the seasons, and to resist or to buy off the invasion of an enemy. In all the cities were multitudes of merchants and bankers, for all occasions of mo-  
 nied assistance ; and on the other hand, the native princes were in condition to obtain credit from them. The manufacturer was paid by the return of commodities, or by imported money, and not, as at present, in the taxes that had been originally exacted from his industry. In aid of casual distress, the country was full of choultries, which were inns and hospitals, where the traveller and the poor were relieved. All ranks of people had their place in the public concern, and their share in the common stock and common prosperity ; but *the chartered rights of men*, and the right which it was thought proper to set up in the Nabob of Arcot, introduced a new system. It was their policy to consider hoards of money as crimes ; to regard moderate rents as frauds on the sovereign ; and to view, in the lesser princes, any claim of exemption from more than settled tribute, as an act of rebellion. Accordingly all the castles were, one after the other, plundered and destroyed. The native princes were expelled ; the hospitals fell to ruin ; the reservoirs of water went to decay ; the merchants, bankers, and manufacturers disappeared ; and sterility, indigence, and depopulation, overspread the face of these once flourishing provinces.

The Company was very early sensible of these mischiefs, and of their true cause. They gave precise orders,

orders, " that the native princes, called Polygars, " should *not be extirpated*.—That the rebellion [so " they choose to call it] of the Polygars, may (they " fear) *with too much justice*, be attributed to the " mal-administration of the Nabob's collectors." That " they observe with concern, that their " troops have been put to *disagreeable services*." They might have used a stronger expression without impropriety. But they make amends in another place. Speaking of the Polygars, the Directors say, that " it was repugnant to humanity " to *force* them to such dreadful extremities *as " they underwent*." That some examples of severity *might* be necessary, " when they fell into " the Nabob's hands," *and not by the destruction of the country*. " That *they fear* his government " is *none of the mildest*; and that there is *great " oppression* in collecting his revenues." They state, that the wars in which he has involved the Carnatic, had been a cause of its distresses. " That these distresses have been certainly great; " but those by *the Nabob's oppressions* we believe " to be *greater than all*." Pray, Sir, attend to the reason for their opinion that the government of this their instrument is more calamitous to the country than the ravages of war.—Because, say they, his oppressions are " *without intermission*.—The others are temporary; " by all which *oppressions* we believe the Nabob " has great wealth in store." From this store neither he nor they could derive any advantage whatsoever, upon the invasion of Hyder Ali in the hour of their greatest calamity and dismay.

It is now proper to compare these declarations with the Company's conduct. The principal reason which they assigned against the *extirpation* of



of the Polygars was, that the *weavers* were protected in their fortresses. They might have added, that the Company itself, which stung them to death, had been warmed in the bosom of these unfortunate princes : for, on the taking of Madras by the French, it was in their hospitable Pollams, that most of the inhabitants found refuge and protection. But, notwithstanding all these orders, reasons, and declarations, they at length gave an indirect sanction, and permitted the use of a very direct and irresistible force, to measures which they had, over and over again, declared to be false policy, cruel, inhuman, and oppressive. Having, however, forgot all attention to the princes and the people, they remembered that they had some sort of interest in the trade of the country ; and it is matter of curiosity to observe the protection which they afforded to this their natural object.

Full of anxious cares on this head, they direct, " that in reducing the Polygars they (their servants) were to be *cautious*, not to deprive the *weavers and manufacturers* of the protection they often met with in the strong holds of the Polygar countries ;"—and they write to their instrument, the Nabob of Arcot, concerning these poor people in a most pathetic strain. " We *entreat* your Excellency (say they) in particular, " to make the manufacturers the object of your *tenderest care* ; particularly when you *root out* the Polygars, you do not deprive the *weavers of the protection they enjoyed under them*." When they root out the protectors in favour of the oppressor, they shew themselves religiously cautious of the rights of the protected. When they extirpate the shepherd and the shepherd's dogs, they piously recommend the helpless flock to the

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mercy,

mercy, and even to the *tendereſt* care, of the wolf. This is the uniform ſtrain of their policy, ſtrictly forbidding, and at the ſame time ſtrenuouſly encouraging and enforcing, every meaſure that can ruin and deſolate the country committed to their charge. After giving the Company's idea of the government of this their inſtrument, it may appear ſingular, but it is perfectly conſiſtent with their ſyſtem, that, beſides waſting for him, at two different times, the moſt exquisite ſpot upon the earth, Tanjour, and all the adjacent countries; they have even voluntarily put their own territory, that is, a large and fine country adjacent to Madras, called their Jaghire, wholly out of their protection; and have continued to farm their ſubjects, and their duties towards theſe ſubjects, to that very Nabob, whom they themſelves conſtantly repreſent as an habitual oppreſſor; and a relentless tyrant. This they have done without any pretence of ignorance of the objects of oppreſſion for which this prince has thought fit to become their renter; for he has again and again told them, that it is for the ſole purpoſe of exerciſing authority he holds the Jaghire lands; and he affirms (and I believe with truth) that he pays more for that territory than the revenues yield. This deficiency he muſt make up from his other territories; and thus, in order to furniſh the means of oppreſſing one part of the Carnatic, he is led to oppreſs all the reſt.

The Houſe perceives that the livery of the Company's government is uniform. I have deſcribed the condition of the countries indirectly, but moſt ſubſtantially, under the Company's authority. And now I aſk, whether, with this map of miſgovernment before me, I can ſuppoſe myſelf bound by my

vote to continue, upon any principles of pretended public faith, the management of these countries in those hands. If I kept such a faith (which in reality is no better than a *fides latronum*) with what is called the Company, I must break the faith, the covenant, the solemn, original, indispensable oath, in which I am bound, by the eternal frame and constitution of things, to the whole human race.

As I have dwelt so long on these who are indirectly under the Company's administration, I will endeavour to be a little shorter upon the countries immediately under this charter government.—These are the Bengal provinces. The condition of these provinces is pretty fully detailed in the Sixth and Ninth Reports, and in their Appendixes. I will select only such principles and instances as are broad and general. To your own thoughts I shall leave it, to furnish the detail of oppressions involved in them. I shall state to you, as shortly as I am able, the conduct of the Company;—1st, towards the landed interests;—next, the commercial interests;—3dly, the native government;—and lastly, to their own government.

Bengal, and the provinces that are united to it, are larger than the kingdom of France; and once contained, as France does contain, a great and independent landed interest, composed of princes, of great lords, of a numerous nobility and gentry, of freeholders, of lower tenants, of religious communities, and public foundations. So early as 1769, the Company's servants perceived the decay into which these provinces had fallen under English administration, and they made a strong representation upon this decay, and what they

apprehended to be the causes of it. Soon after Mr. Hastings became president of Bengal. Instead of administering a remedy, upon the heels of a dreadful famine, in the year 1772, the succour which the new president and the council lent to this afflicted nation was—shall I be believed in relating it?—the landed interest of a whole kingdom, of a kingdom to be compared to France, was set up to public auction! They set up (Mr. Hastings set up) the whole nobility, gentry, and freeholders, to the highest bidder. No preference was given to the ancient proprietors. They must bid against every usurer, every temporary adventurer, every jobber and schemer, every servant of every European, or they were obliged to content themselves, in lieu of their extensive domains, with their house, and such a pension as the state auctioneers thought fit to assign. In this general calamity, several of the first nobility thought (and in all appearance justly) that they had better submit to the necessity of this pension, than continue, under the name of Zemindars, the objects and instruments of a system, by which they ruined their tenants, and were ruined themselves. Another reform has since come upon the back of the first, and a pension having been assigned to these unhappy persons, in lieu of their hereditary lands, a new scheme of economy has taken place, and deprived them of that pension.

The menial servants of Englishmen, persons (to use the emphatical phrase of a ruined and patient Eastern chief) "*whose fathers they would not have set with the dogs of their flock,*" entered into their patrimonial lands. Mr. Hastings's banian was, after this auction, found possessed of territories yielding a rent of one hundred and forty thousand pounds a year.

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Such an universal proscription, upon any pretence, has few examples. Such a proscription, without even a pretence of delinquency, has none. It stands by itself. It stands as a monument to astonish the imagination, to confound the reason of mankind. I confess to you, when I first came to know this business in its true nature and extent, my surprise did a little suspend my indignation. I was in a manner stupified by the desperate boldness of a few obscure young men, who having obtained, by ways which they could not comprehend, a power of which they saw neither the purposes nor the limits, tossed about, subverted, and tore to pieces, as if it were in the gambols of a boyish unluckiness and malice, the most established rights, and the most ancient and most revered institutions, of ages and nations. Sir, I will not now trouble you with any detail with regard to what they have since done with these same lands and land-holders; only to inform you, that nothing has been suffered to settle for two seasons together upon any basis; and that the levity and inconstancy of these mock legislators were not the least afflicting parts of the oppressions suffered under their usurpation; nor will any thing give stability to the property of the natives, but an administration in England at once protecting and stable. The country sustains, almost every year, the miseries of a revolution. At present, all is uncertainty, misery, and confusion. There is to be found through these vast regions no longer one landed man, who is a resource for voluntary aid, or an object for particular rapine. Some of them were, not long since, great princes; they possessed treasures, they levied armies. There was a Zemindar in Bengal (I forget his name) that, on the threat of an invasion, supplied the Soubah of these provinces with the loan of a

million sterling. The family this day wants credit for a breakfast at the bazar.

I shall now say a word or two on the Company's care of the commercial interest of those kingdoms. As it appears in the Reports, that persons in the highest stations in Bengal have adopted, as a fixed plan of policy, the destruction of all intermediate dealers between the Company and the manufacturer, native merchants have disappeared of course. The spoil of the revenues is the sole capital which purchases the produce and manufactures; and through three or four foreign companies transmits the official gains of individuals to Europe. No other commerce has an existence in Bengal. The transport of its plunder is the only traffic of the country. I wish to refer you to the Appendix to the Ninth Report for a full account of the manner in which the Company have protected the commercial interests of their dominions in the East.

As to the native government and the administration of justice, it subsisted in a poor tottering manner for some years. In the year 1781, a total revolution took place in that establishment. In one of the usual freaks of legislation of the council of Bengal, the whole criminal jurisdiction of these courts, called the Phoujdary Judicature, exercised till then by the principal Mussulmen, was in one day, without notice, without consultation with the magistrates or the people there, and without communication with the directors or ministers here, totally subverted. A new institution took place, by which this jurisdiction was divided between certain English servants of the Company and the Gentû Zemindars of the country, the latter of whom never petitioned for it, nor, for ought that appears, ever desired this boon. But its natural use was

made of it; it was made a pretence for new extortions of money.

The natives had however one consolation in the ruin of their judicature; they soon saw that it fared no better with the English government itself. That too, after destroying every other, came to its period. This revolution may well be rated for a most daring act, even among the extraordinary things that have been doing in Bengal since our unhappy acquisition of the means of so much mischief.

An establishment of English government for civil justice, and for the collection of revenue, was planned and executed by the president and council of Bengal, subject to the pleasure of the Directors, in the year 1772. According to this plan, the country was divided into six great districts, or provinces. In each of these was established a provincial council, which administered the revenue; and of that council one member, by monthly rotation, presided in the courts of civil resort; with an appeal to the council of the province, and thence to Calcutta. In this system (whether, in other respects, good or evil) there were some capital advantages. There was in the very number of persons in each provincial council, authority, communication, mutual check, and controul. They were obliged, on their minutes of consultation, to enter their reasons and dissents; so that a man of diligence, of research, and tolerable sagacity, sitting in London, might, from these materials, be enabled to form some judgment of the spirit of what was going on on the furthest banks of the Ganges and Burrampooter.

The Court of Directors so far ratified this establishment, (which was consonant enough to their general plan of government) that they gave

precise orders, that no alteration should be made in it, without their consent. So far from being apprised of any design against this constitution, they had reason to conceive that on trial it had been more and more approved by their council general, at least by the governor general, who had planned it. At the time of the revolution, the council general was nominally in two persons, virtually in one. At that time measures of an arduous and critical nature ought to have been forborne, even if, to the fullest council, this specific measure had not been prohibited by the superior authority. It was in this very situation, that one man had the hardiness to conceive, and the temerity to execute, a total revolution in the form and the persons composing the government of a great kingdom. Without any previous step, at one stroke, the whole constitution of Bengal, civil and criminal, was swept away. The councillors were recalled from their provinces. Upwards of fifty of the principal officers of government were turned out of employ, and rendered dependent on Mr. Hastings for their immediate subsistence, and for all hope of future provision. The chief of each council, and one European collector of revenue, was left in each province.

But here, Sir, you may imagine a new government, of some permanent description, was established in the place of that which had been thus suddenly overturned. No such thing. Left these chiefs without councils should be conceived to form the ground-plan of some future government, it was publicly declared, that their continuance was only temporary and permissive. The whole subordinate British administration of revenue was then vested in a committee in Calcutta, all  
creatures



creatures of the governor general; and the provincial management, under the permissive chief, was delivered over to native officers.

But, that the revolution, and the purposes of the revolution, might be complete, to this committee were delegated, not only the functions of all the inferior, but, what will surprize the House, those of the supreme administration of revenue also. Hitherto the governor general and council had, in their revenue department, administered the finances of those kingdoms. By the new scheme they are delegated to this committee, who are only to report their proceedings for approbation.

The key to the whole transaction is given in one of the instructions to the committee, "that it is not necessary that they should enter dissent." By this means the ancient plan of the Company's administration was destroyed; but the plan of concealment was perfected. To that moment the accounts of the revenues were tolerably clear; or at least means were furnished for enquiries, by which they might be rendered satisfactory. In the obscure and silent gulph of this committee every thing is now buried. The thickest shades of night surround all their transactions. No effectual means of detecting fraud, mismanagement, or misrepresentation, exist. The Directors, who have dared to talk with such confidence on their revenues, know nothing about them. What used to fill volumes is now comprised under a few dry heads on a sheet of paper. The natives, a people habitually made to concealment, are the chief managers of the revenue throughout the provinces. I mean by natives, such wretches as your rulers select out of them as most fitted for their purposes. As a proper

proper key-stone to bind the arch, a native, one Gunga Govind Sing, a man turned out of his employment by Sir John Clavering, for malversation in office, is made the corresponding secretary; and indeed the great moving principle of their new board.

As the whole revenue and civil administration was thus subverted, and a clandestine government substituted in the place of it, the judicial institution underwent a like revolution. In 1772 there had been six courts formed out of the six provincial councils. Eighteen new ones are appointed in their place, with each a judge, taken from the *junior* servants of the Company. To maintain these eighteen courts, a tax is levied on the sums in litigation, of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  *per cent.* on the great, and of 5 *per cent.* on the less. This money is all drawn from the provinces to Calcutta. The chief justice (the same who stays in defiance of a vote of this House, and of His Majesty's recal) is appointed at once the treasurer and disposer of these taxes, levied, without any sort of authority, from the Company, from the Crown, or from Parliament.

In effect, Sir, every legal regular authority in matters of revenue, of political administration, of criminal law, of civil law, in many of the most essential parts of military discipline, is laid level with the ground; and an oppressive, irregular, capricious, unsteady, rapacious, and peculating despotism, with a direct disavowal of obedience to any authority at home, and without any fixed maxim, principle, or rule of proceeding, to guide them in India, is at present the state of your charter-government over great kingdoms.

As the Company has made this use of their trust, I should ill discharge mine, if I refused to  
give

give my most chearful vote for the redress of these abuses, by putting the affairs of so large and valuable a part of the interests of this nation and of mankind, into some steady hands, possessing the confidence, and assured of the support of this House, until they can be restored to regularity, order, and consistency.

I have touched the heads of some of the grievances of the people, and the abuses of government. But I hope and trust, you will give me credit, when I faithfully assure you, that I have not mentioned one fourth part of what has come to my knowledge in your committee, and further, I have full reason to believe, that not one fourth part of the abuses are come to my knowledge, by that or by any other means. Pray consider what I have said only as an index to direct you in your enquiries.

If this then, Sir, has been the use made of the trust of political powers internal and external, given by you in the charter, the next thing to be seen is the conduct of the Company with regard to the commercial trust. And here I will make a fair offer:—If it can be proved that they have acted wisely, prudently, and frugally, as merchants, I shall pass by the whole mass of their enormities as statesmen. That they have not done this their present condition is proof sufficient. Their distresses are said to be owing to their wars. This is not wholly true. But if it were, is not that readiness to engage in wars which distinguishes them, and for which the Committee of Secrecy has so branded their politics, founded on the falsest principles of mercantile speculation?

The principle of buying cheap and selling dear is the first, the great foundation of mercantile dealing.

dealing. Have they ever attended to this principle? Nay, for years have they not actually authorized in their servants a total indifference as to the prices they were to pay?

A great deal of strictness in driving bargains for whatever we contract, is another of the principles of mercantile policy. Try the Company by that test! Look at the contracts that are made for them. Is the Company so much as a good commissary to their own armies? I engage to select for you, out of the innumerable masts of their dealings, all conducted very nearly alike, one contract only, the excessive profits on which during a short term would pay the whole of their year's dividend. I shall undertake to shew, that upon two others, that the inordinate profits given, with the losses incurred in order to secure those profits, would pay a year's dividend more.

It is a third property of trading men, to see that their clerks do not divert the dealings of the master to their own benefit. It was the other day only, when their governor and council taxed the Company's investment with a sum of fifty thousand pounds, as an inducement to persuade only seven members of their board of trade to give their *honour* that they would abstain from such profits upon that investment as they must have violated their *oaths* if they had made at all.

It is a fourth quality of a merchant to be exact in his accounts. What will be thought, when you have fully before you the mode of accounting made use of in the treasury of Bengal?—I hope you will have it soon. With regard to one of their agencies, when it came to the material part, the prime cost of the goods

goods on which a commission of fifteen *per cent.* was allowed, to the astonishment of the factory to whom the commodities were sent, the accountant general reports that he did not think himself authorized to call for *vouchers* relative to this and other particulars,—because the agent was upon his *honour* with regard to them. A new principle of account upon honour seems to be regularly established in their dealings and their treasury, which in reality amounts to an entire annihilation of the principle of all accounts.

It is a fifth property of a merchant, who does not meditate a fraudulent bankruptcy, to calculate his probable profits upon the money he takes up to vest in business. Did the Company, when they bought goods on bonds bearing 8 *per cent.* interest, at ten and even twenty *per cent.* discount, even ask themselves a question concerning the possibility of advantage from dealing on these terms?

The last quality of a merchant I shall advert to, is the taking care to be properly prepared, in cash or goods, in the ordinary course of sale, for the bills which are drawn on them. Now I ask, whether they have ever calculated the clear produce of any given sales, to make them tally with the four million of bills which are come and coming upon them, so as at the proper periods to enable the one to liquidate the other? No, they have not. They are now obliged to borrow money of their own servants to purchase their investment. The servants stipulate five *per cent.* on the capital they advance, if their bills should not be paid at the time when they become due; and the value of the rupee on which they charge this interest is taken at two shillings and a penny. Has the Company ever troubled themselves to enquire whether their sales can bear the payment

payment of that interest, and at that rate of exchange? Have they once considered the dilemma in which they are placed—the ruin of their credit in the East Indies, if they refuse the bills—the ruin of their credit and existence in England, if they accept them? Indeed no trace of equitable government is found in their politics; not one trace of commercial principle in their mercantile dealing; and hence is the deepest and maturest wisdom of Parliament demanded, and the best resources of this kingdom must be strained, to restore them; that is, to restore the countries destroyed by the misconduct of the Company, and to restore the Company itself, ruined by the consequences of their plans for destroying what they were bound to preserve.

I required, if you remember, at my outset a proof that these abuses were habitual. But surely this it is not necessary for me to consider as a separate head; because I trust I have made it evident beyond a doubt, in considering the abuses themselves, that they are regular, permanent, and systematical.

I am now come to my last condition, without which, for one, I will never readily lend my hand to the destruction of any established government; which is, That in its present state, the government of the East India Company is absolutely incorrigible.

Of this great truth I think there can be little doubt, after all that has appeared in this House. It is so very clear, that I must consider the leaving any power in their hands, and the determined resolution to continue and countenance every mode and every degree of speculation, oppression, and tyranny, to be one and the same thing. I look upon that body incorrigible, from the fullest consideration both of their uniform conduct,

conduct, and their present real and virtual constitution.

If they had not constantly been apprized of all the enormities committed in India under their authority; if this state of things had been as much a discovery to them as it was to many of us; we might flatter ourselves that the detection of the abuses would lead to their reformation. I will go further: If the Court of Directors had not uniformly condemned every act which this House or any of its Committees had condemned; if the language in which they expressed their disapprobation against enormities and their authors had not been much more vehement and indignant than any ever used in this House, I should entertain some hopes. If they had not, on the other hand, as uniformly commended all their servants who had done their duty and obeyed their orders, as they had heavily censured those who rebelled; I might say, These people have been in an error, and when they are sensible of it they will mend. But when I reflect on the uniformity of their support to the objects of their uniform censure; and the state of insignificance and disgrace to which all of those have been reduced whom they approved; and that even utter ruin and premature death have been among the fruits of their favour; I must be convinced, that in this case, as in all others, hypocrisy is the only vice that never can be cured.

Attend, I pray you, to the situation and prosperity of Benfield, Hastings, and others of that sort. The last of these has been treated by the company with an asperity of reprehension that has no parallel. They lament, "that the power of disposing of their property for perpetuity, should fall into such hands." Yet for fourteen years,  
with

with little interruption, he has governed all their affairs, of every description, with an absolute sway. He has had himself the means of heaping up immense wealth; and, during that whole period, the fortunes of hundreds have depended on his smiles and frowns. He himself tells you he is incumbered with two hundred and fifty young gentlemen, some of them of the best families in England, all of whom aim at returning with vast fortunes to Europe in the prime of life. He has then two hundred and fifty of your children as his hostages for your good behaviour; and loaded for years, as he has been, with the execrations of the natives, with the censures of the Court of Directors, and struck and blasted with resolutions of this House, he still maintains the most despotic power ever known in India. He domineers with an overbearing sway in the assemblies of his pretended masters; and it is thought in a degree rash to venture to name his offences in this House, even as grounds of a legislative remedy.

On the other hand, consider the fate of those who have met with the applauses of the Directors. Colonel Monson, one of the best of men, had his days shortened by the applauses, destitute of the support, of the Company. General Clavering, whose panegyric was made in every dispatch from England, whose hearse was bedewed with the tears, and hung round with eulogies of the Court of Directors, burst an honest and indignant heart at the treachery of those who ruined him by their praises. Uncommon patience and temper, supported Mr. Francis a while longer under the baneful influence of the commendation of the Court of Directors. His health however gave way at length; and, in utter despair  
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he returned to Europe. At his return the doors of the India House were shut to this man, who had been the object of their constant admiration. He has indeed escaped with life, but he has forfeited all expectation of credit, consequence, party, and following. He may well say, *Me nemo ministro fur erit, atque ideo nulli comes exeo*. This man, whose deep reach of thought, whose large legislative conceptions, and whose grand plans of policy, make the most shining part of our Reports, from whence we have all learned our lessons, if we have learned any good ones; this man, from whose materials those gentlemen who have least acknowledged it have yet spoken as from a brief; this man, driven from his employment, discountenanced by the Directors, has had no other reward, and no other distinction, but that inward "sun-shine of the soul" which a good conscience can always bestow upon itself. He has not yet had so much as a good word, but from a person too insignificant to make any other return for the means with which he has been furnished for performing his share of a duty which is equally urgent on us all.

Add to this, that from the highest in place to the lowest, every British subject, who, in obedience to the Company's orders, has been active in the discovery of peculations, has been ruined. They have been driven from India. When they made their appeal at home they were not heard; when they attempted to return they were stopped. No artifice of fraud, no violence of power, has been omitted, to destroy them in character as well as in fortune.

Worse, far worse, has been the fate of the poor creatures, the natives of India, whom the hypocrisy of the Company has betrayed into complaint

of oppression, and discovery of peculation. The first woman in Bengal, the Ranni of Rajeshahi, the Ranni of Burdwan, the Ranni of Amboaz, by their weak and thoughtless trust in the Company's honour and protection, are utterly ruined: the first of these women, a person of princely rank, and once of correspondent fortune, who paid above two hundred thousand a year quit-rent to the state, is, according to very credible information, so completely beggared as to stand in need of the relief of alms. Mahomed Reza Khân, the second Mussulman in Bengal, for having been distinguished by the ill-omened honour of the countenance and protection of the Court of Directors, was, without the pretence of any enquiry whatsoever into his conduct, stripped of all his employments, and reduced to the lowest condition. His ancient rival for power, the Rajah Nundcomar, was, by an insult on every thing which India holds respectable and sacred, hanged in the face of all his nation, by the judges you sent to protect that people; hanged for a pretended crime, upon an *ex post facto* British act of parliament, in the midst of his evidence against Mr. Hastings. The accuser they saw hanged. The culprit, without acquittal or enquiry, triumphs on the ground of that murder: a murder not of Nundcomar only, but of all living testimony, and even of evidence yet unborn. From that time not a complaint has been heard from the natives against their governors. All the grievances of India have found a complete remedy.

Men will not look to acts of parliament, to regulations, to declarations, to votes, and resolutions. No, they are not such fools. They will ask, what is the road to power, credit, wealth, and honours? They will ask, what conduct ends in neglect,

neglect, disgrace, poverty, exile, prison, and gibbet? These will teach them the course which they are to follow. It is your distribution of these that will give the character and tone to your government. All the rest is miserable grimace.

When I accuse the Court of Directors of this habitual treachery, in the use of reward and punishment, I do not mean to include all the individuals in that Court. There have been, Sir, very frequently, men of the greatest integrity and virtue amongst them; and the contrariety in the declarations and conduct of that Court has arisen, I take it, from this:—That the honest Directors have, by the force of matter of fact on the records, carried the reprobation of the evil measures of the servants in India. This could not be prevented, whilst these records stared them in the face; nor were the delinquents, either here or there, very solicitous about their reputation, as long as they were able to secure their power. The agreement of their partizans to censure them, blunted for a while the edge of a severe proceeding. It obtained for them a character of impartiality, which enabled them to recommend, with some sort of grace, what will always carry a plausible appearance, those treacherous expedients, called moderate measures. Whilst these were under discussion, new matter of complaint came over, which seemed to antedate the first. The same circle was here trod round once more; and thus through years they proceeded in a compromise of censure for punishment; until, by shame and despair, one after another, almost every man, who preferred his duty to the Company to the interests of their servants, has been driven from that Court.

This, Sir, has been their conduct; and it has been the result of the alteration which was insensibly

made in their constitution. The change was made insensibly ; but it is now strong and adult, and as public and declared, as it is fixed beyond all power of reformation. So that there is none who hears me, that is not as certain as I am, that the Company, in the sense in which it was formerly understood, has no existence. The question is not, what injury you may do to the proprietors of India stock ; for there are no such men to be injured. If the active ruling part of the Company who form the general court, who fill the offices, and direct the measures (the rest tell for nothing) were persons who held their stock as a means of their subsistence, who in the part they took were only concerned in the government of India, for the rise or fall of their dividend, it would be indeed a defective plan of policy. The interest of the people who are governed by them would not be their primary object ; perhaps a very small part of their consideration at all. But then they might well be depended on, and perhaps more than persons in other respects preferable, for preventing the speculations of their servants to their own prejudice. Such a body would not easily have left their trade as a spoil to the avarice of those who received their wages. But now things are totally reversed. The stock is of no value, whether it be the qualification of a director or proprietor, and it is impossible that it should. A director's qualification may be worth about two thousand five hundred pounds—and the interest, at eight *per cent.* is about one hundred and sixty pounds a year. Of what value is that, whether it rise to ten, or fall to six, or to nothing, to him whose son, before he is in Bengal two months, and before he descends the steps of the council chamber, sells the grant of a single contract for forty thousand pounds ?

pounds? Accordingly the stock is bought up in qualifications. The vote is not to protect the stock, but the stock is bought to acquire the vote; and the end of the vote is to cover and support, against justice, some man of power who has made an obnoxious fortune in India; or to maintain in power those who are actually employing it in the acquisition of such a fortune; and to avail themselves in return of his patronage, that he may shower the spoils of the East, "barbaric pearl and gold," on them, their families, and dependents. So that all the relations of the Company are not only changed, but inverted. The servants in India are not appointed by the Directors, but the Directors are chosen by them. The trade is carried on with their capitals. To them the revenues of the country are mortgaged. The seat of the supreme power is in Calcutta. The house in Leadenhall Street is nothing more than a change for their agents, factors, and deputies to meet in, to take care of their affairs, and support their interests; and this so avowedly, that we see the known agents of the delinquent servants marshalling and disciplining their forces, and the prime spokesmen in all their assemblies.

Every thing has followed in this order, and according to the natural train of events. I will close what I have to say on the incorrigible condition of the Company, by stating to you a few facts, that will leave no doubt of the obstinacy of that corporation, and of their strength too, in resisting the reformation of their servants. By these facts you will be enabled to discover the sole grounds upon which they are tenacious of their charter. It is now more than two years that, upon account of the gross abuses and ruinous situation of the Company's affairs, (which occasioned the cry of the whole world long before it was taken up here) that we

instituted two Committees to enquire into the mismanagements by which the Company's affairs had been brought to the brink of ruin. These enquiries had been pursued with unremitting diligence; and a great body of facts was collected and printed for general information. In the result of those enquiries, although the Committees consisted of very different descriptions, they were unanimous. They joined in censuring the conduct of the Indian administration, and enforcing the responsibility upon two men, whom this House, in consequence of these reports, declared it to be the duty of the Directors to remove from their stations, and recall to Great Britain, "*because they had acted in a manner repugnant to the honour and policy of this nation, and thereby brought great calamities on India, and enormous expences on the East India Company.*"

Here was no attempt on the charter. Here was no question of their privileges. To vindicate their own honour, to support their own interests, to enforce obedience to their own orders; these were the sole object of the monitory resolution of this House. But as soon as the general court could assemble, they assembled to demonstrate who they really were. Regardless of the proceedings of this House, they ordered the Directors not to carry into effect any resolution they might come to for the removal of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Hornby. The Directors, still retaining some shadow of respect to this House, instituted an enquiry themselves, which continued from June to October; and after an attentive perusal and full consideration of papers, resolved to take steps for removing the persons who had been the objects of our resolution; but not without a violent struggle against evidence. Seven Directors went so far as to enter a protest against the vote of their court.

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Upon this the general court takes the alarm; it re-assembles; it orders the Directors to rescind their resolution, that is, not to recal Mr. Hastings and Mr. Hornby, and to despise the resolution of the House of Commons. Without so much as the pretence of looking into a single paper, without the formality of instituting any committee of enquiry, they superseded all the labours of their own Directors, and of this House.

It will naturally occur to ask, how it was possible that they should not attempt some sort of examination into facts, as a colour for their resistance to a public authority, proceeding so very deliberately; and exerted, apparently at least, in favour of their own? The answer, and the only answer which can be given, is, that they were afraid that their true relation should be mistaken. They were afraid that their patrons and masters in India should attribute their support of them, to an opinion of their cause, and not to an attachment to their power. They were afraid it should be suspected, that they did not mean blindly to support them in the use they made of that power. They determined to shew that they at least were set against reformation; that they were firmly resolved to bring the territories, the trade, and the stock of the Company, to ruin, rather than be wanting in fidelity to their nominal servants and real masters, in the ways they took to their private fortunes.

Even since the beginning of this session, the same act of audacity was repeated, with the same circumstances of contempt of all the decorum of enquiry, on their part, and of all the proceedings of this House. They again made it a request to their favourite, and your culprit, to keep his post; and thanked and applauded him, without calling for a paper which could afford light into the

merit or demerit of the transaction, and without giving themselves a moment's time to consider, or even to understand, the articles of the Maratta peace. The fact is, that for a long time there was a struggle, a faint one indeed, between the Company and their servants. But it is a struggle no longer. For some time the superiority has been decided. The interests abroad are become the settled preponderating weight both in the Court of Proprietors, and the Court of Directors. Even the attempt you have made to enquire into their practices and to reform abuses, has raised and piqued them to a far more regular and steady support. The Company has made a common cause, and identified themselves, with the destroyers of India. They have taken on themselves all that mass of enormity; they are supporting what you have reprobated; those you condemn they applaud; those you order home to answer for their conduct, they request to stay, and thereby encourage to proceed in their practices. Thus the servants of the East India Company triumph, and the representatives of the people of Great Britain are defeated.

I therefore conclude, what you all conclude, that this body, being totally perverted from the purposes of its institution, is utterly incorrigible; and because they are incorrigible, both in conduct and constitution, power ought to be taken out of their hands; just on the same principles on which have been made all the just changes and revolutions of government that have taken place since the beginning of the world.

I will now say a few words to the general principle of the plan which is set up against that of my Right Honourable friend. It is to re-commit the government of India to the Court of Directors. Those who would commit the reformation



mation of India to the destroyers of it, are the enemies to that reformation. They would make a distinction between Directors and Proprietors, which, in the present state of things, does not, cannot exist. But a Right Honourable gentleman says, he would keep the present government of India in the Court of Directors; and would, to curb them, provide salutary regulations;—wonderful! That is, he would appoint the old offenders to correct the old offences; and he would render the vicious and the foolish wise and virtuous, by salutary regulations. He would appoint the wolf as guardian of the sheep; but he has invented a curious muzzle, by which this protecting wolf shall not be able to open his jaws above an inch or two at the utmost. Thus his work is finished. But I tell the Right Honourable gentleman, that controuled depravity is not innocence; and that it is not the labour of delinquency in chains, that will correct abuses. Will these gentlemen of the direction animadvert on the partners of their own guilt? Never did a serious plan of amending of any old tyrannical establishment propose the authors and abettors of the abuses as the reformers of them. If the undone people of India see their old oppressors in confirmed power, even by the reformation, they will expect nothing but what they will certainly feel, a continuance; or rather an aggravation, of all their former sufferings. They look to the seat of power, and to the persons who fill it; and they despise those gentlemen's regulations as much as the gentlemen do who talk of them.

But there is a cure for every thing. Take away, say they, the Court of Proprietors, and the Court of Directors will do their duty. Yes; as they have done it hitherto. That the evils in India have solely arisen from the Court of Proprietors,

is grossly false. In many of them, the Directors were heartily concurring; in most of them they were encouraging, and sometimes commanding; in all they were conniving.

But who are to choose this well-regulated and reforming Court of Directors?—Why, the very proprietors who are excluded from all management, for the abuse of their power. They will choose undoubtedly, out of themselves, men like themselves; and those who are most forward in resisting your authority, those who are most engaged in faction or interest with the delinquents abroad, will be the objects of their selection. But Gentlemen say, that when this choice is made, the proprietors are not to interfere in the measures of the Directors, whilst those Directors are busy in the control of their common patrons and masters in India. No, indeed, I believe they will not desire to interfere. They will choose those whom they know may be trusted, safely trusted, to act in strict conformity to their common principles, manners, measures, interests, and connections. They will want neither monitor nor control. It is not easy to choose men to act in conformity to a public interest against their private: but a sure dependance may be had on those who are chosen to forward their private interest, at the expence of the public. But if the Directors should slip, and deviate into rectitude, the punishment is in the hands of the general court, and it will surely be remembered to them at their next election.

If the government of India wants no reformation; but gentlemen are amusing themselves with a theory, conceiving a more democratic or aristocratic mode of government for these dependances, or if they are in a dispute only about patronage; the dispute is with me of so little concern, that I should not take the pains to utter an affirmative

affirmative or negative to any proposition in it. If it be only for a theoretical amusement that they are to propose a bill; the thing is at best frivolous and unnecessary. But if the Company's government is not only full of abuse, but is one of the most corrupt and destructive tyrannies, that probably ever existed in the world (as I am sure it is) what a cruel mockery would it be in me, and in those who think like me, to propose this kind of remedy for this kind of evil!

I now come to the third objection, That this bill will increase the influence of the Crown. An Honourable gentleman has demanded of me, whether I was in earnest when I proposed to this House a plan for the reduction of that influence. Indeed, Sir, I was much, very much, in earnest. My heart was deeply concerned in it; and I hope the public has not lost the effect of it. How far my judgment was right, for what concerned personal favour and consequence to myself, I shall not presume to determine; nor is its effect upon *me* of any moment. But as to this bill, whether it encreases the influence of the Crown, or not, is a question I should be ashamed to ask. If I am not able to correct a system of oppression and tyranny, that goes to the utter ruin of thirty millions of my fellow-creatures and fellow-subjects, but by some increase to the influence of the Crown, I am ready here to declare, that I, who have been active to reduce it, shall be at least as active and strenuous to restore it again. I am no lover of names; I contend for the substance of good and protecting government, let it come from what quarter it will.

But I am not obliged to have recourse to this expedient. Much, very much the contrary. I am sure that the influence of the Crown will by no means aid a reformation of this kind; which  
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can neither be originated nor supported, but by the uncorrupt public virtue of the representatives of the people of England. Let it once get into the ordinary course of administration, and to me all hopes of reformation are gone. I am far from knowing or believing, that this bill will encrease the influence of the Crown. We all know, that the Crown has ever had some influence in the Court of Directors; and that it has been extremely increased by the acts of 1773 and 1780. The gentlemen who, as part of their reformation, propose "a more active controul on the part of the "Crown," which is to put the Directors under a Secretary of State, specially named for that purpose, must know, that their project will increase it further. But that old influence has had, and the new will have, incurable inconveniences, which cannot happen under the parliamentary establishment proposed in this bill. \* An Honourable gentleman not now in his place, but who is well acquainted with the India Company, and by no means a friend to this bill, has told you that a ministerial influence has always been predominant in that body; and that to make the Directors pliant to their purposes, Ministers generally caused persons meanly qualified to be chosen Directors. According to his idea, to secure subserviency, they submitted the Company's affairs to the direction of incapacity. This was to ruin the Company, in order to govern it. This was certainly influence in the very worst form in which it could appear. At best it was clandestine and irresponsible. Whether this was done so much upon system as that gentleman supposes, I greatly doubt. But such in effect the operation of Government on that court unquestionably was; and such under a similar constitution, it will be for ever.

\* Governor Johnstone,

Ministers

Ministers must be wholly removed from the management of the affairs of India, or they will have an influence in its patronage. The thing is inevitable. Their scheme of a new Secretary of State, "with a more vigorous " control," is not much better than a repetition of the measure which we know by experience will not do. Since the year 1773 and the year 1780, the Company has been under the control of the Secretary of State's office, and we had then three Secretaries of State. If more than this is done, then they annihilate the direction which they pretend to support; and they augment the influence of the Crown, of whose growth they affect so great an horror. But in truth this scheme of reconciling a direction really and truly deliberative, with an office really and substantially controlling, is a sort of machinery that can be kept in order but a very short time. Either the Directors will dwindle into clerks, or the Secretary of State, as hitherto has been the course, will leave every thing to them, often through design, often through neglect. If both should affect activity, collision, procrastination, delay, and in the end, utter confusion must ensue.

But, Sir, there is one kind of influence far greater than that of the nomination to office. This gentlemen in opposition have totally overlooked, although it now exists in its full vigour; and it will do so, upon their scheme, in at least as much force as it does now. That influence this bill cuts up by the roots; I mean the *influence of protection*. I shall explain myself:—The office given to a young man going to India is of trifling consequence. But he that goes out an insignificant boy, in a few years returns a great Nabob. Mr. Hastings says he has two hundred and fifty of that kind of raw materials, who expect to be speedily

speedily manufactured into the merchantable quality I mention. One of these gentlemen, suppose, returns hither, loaded with odium and with riches. When he comes to England he comes as to a prison or as to a sanctuary; and either are ready for him, according to his demeanor. What is the influence in the grant of any place in India, to that which is acquired by the protection or compromise with such guilt, and with the command of such riches, under the dominion of the hopes and fears which power is able to hold out to every man in that condition? That man's whole fortune, half a million perhaps, becomes an instrument of influence, without a shilling of charge to the Civil List; and the influx of fortunes which stand in need of this protection is continual. It works both ways; it influences the delinquent, and it may corrupt the minister. Compare the influence acquired by appointing for instance even a governor general, and that obtained by protecting him. I shall push this no further. But I wish gentlemen to roll it a little in their own minds.

The bill before you cuts off this source of influence. Its design and main scope is to regulate the administration of India upon the principles of a Court of Judicature; and to exclude, as far as human prudence can exclude, all possibility of a corrupt partiality, in appointing to office or supporting in office, or covering from enquiry and punishment, any person who has abused or shall abuse his authority. At the board, as appointed and regulated by this bill, reward and punishment cannot be shifted and reversed by a whisper. That commission becomes fatal to cabal, to intrigue, and to secret representation, those instruments of the ruin of India.

He that cuts off the means of premature fortune, and the power of protecting it when acquired, strikes a deadly blow at the great fund, the Bank, the capital stock of Indian influence, which cannot be vested any where, or in any hands, without most dangerous consequences to the public.

The third and contradictory objection, is, That this bill does not increase the influence of the Crown. On the contrary, That the just power of the Crown will be lessened, and transferred to the use of a party, by giving the patronage of India to a commission nominated by parliament, and independent of the Crown. The contradiction is glaring, and it has been too well exposed to make it necessary for me to insist upon it. But passing the contradiction, and taking it without any relation, of all objections that is the most extraordinary. Do not gentlemen know, that the Crown has not at present the grant of a single office under the Company, civil or military, at home or abroad? So far as the Crown is concerned, it is certainly rather a gainer; for the vacant offices in the new commission are to be filled up by the King.

It is argued as a part of the bill, derogatory to the prerogatives of the Crown, that the commissioners named in the bill are to continue for a short term of years (too short in my opinion) and because, during that time, they are not at the mercy of every predominant faction of the court. Does not this objection lie against the present Directors; none of whom are named by the Crown, and a proportion of whom hold for this very term of four years? Did it not lie against the governor general and council named in the act of 1773—who were invested by name, as the present commissioners are to be appointed

pointed in the body of the act of parliament, who were to hold their places for a term of years, and were not removable at the discretion of the Crown? Did it not lie against the re-appointment, in the year 1780, upon the very same terms? Yet at none of these times, whatever other objections the scheme might be liable to, was it supposed to be a derogation to the just prerogative of the Crown, that a commission created by act of parliament should have its members named by the authority which called it into existence? This is not the disposal by parliament of any office derived from the authority of the Crown, or now disposable by that authority. It is so far from being any thing new, violent, or alarming, that I do not recollect, in any parliamentary commission, down to the commissioners of the land tax, that it has ever been otherwise.

The objection of the tenure for four years is an objection to all places that are not held during pleasure; but in that objection I pronounce the gentlemen, from my knowledge of their complexion and of their principles, to be perfectly in earnest. The party (say these gentlemen) of the minister who proposes this scheme will be rendered powerful by it; for he will name his party friends to the commission. This objection against party is a party objection; and in this too these gentlemen are perfectly serious. They see that if, by any intrigue, they should succeed to office, they will lose the *clandestine* patronage, the true instrument of clandestine influence, enjoyed in the name of subservient Directors, and of wealthy trembling Indian delinquents. But as often as they are beaten off this ground, they return to it again. The minister will name his friends, and persons of his own party. — Who should he name? Should he name his adversaries? Should he name those whom he cannot trust?

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Should he name those to execute his plans, who are the declared enemies to the principles of his reform? His character is here at stake. If he proposes for his own ends (but he never will propose) such names as, from their want of rank, fortune, character, ability, or knowledge, are likely to betray or to fall short of their trust, he is in an independent House of Commons; in an House of Commons which has, by its own virtue, destroyed the instruments of parliamentary subservience. This House of Commons would not endure the sound of such names. He would perish by the means which he is supposed to pursue for the security of his power. The first pledge he must give of his sincerity in this great reform will be in the confidence which ought to be reposed in those names.

For my part, Sir, in this business I put all indirect considerations wholly out of my mind. My sole question, on each clause of the bill, amounts to this:—Is the measure proposed required by the necessities of India? I cannot consent totally to lose sight of the real wants of the people who are the objects of it, and to hunt after every matter of party squabble that may be started on the several provisions. On the question of the duration of the commission I am clear and decided. Can I, can any one who has taken the smallest trouble to be informed concerning the affairs of India, amuse himself with so strange an imagination, as that the habitual despotism and oppression, that the monopolies, the peculations, the universal destruction of all the legal authority of this kingdom, which have been for twenty years maturing to their present enormity, combined with the distance of the scene, the boldness and artifice of delinquents,

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their combination, their excessive wealth, and the faction they have made in England, can be fully corrected in a shorter term than four years? None has hazarded such an assertion—None, who has a regard for his reputation, will hazard it.

Sir, the gentlemen, whoever they are, who shall be appointed to this commission, have an undertaking of magnitude on their hands, and their stability must not only be, but it must be thought, real;—and who is it will believe, that any thing short of an establishment made, supported, and fixed in its duration, with all the authority of parliament, can be thought secure of a reasonable stability? The plan of my Honourable friend is the reverse of that of reforming by the authors of the abuse. The best we could expect from them is, that they should not continue their ancient pernicious activity. To those we could think of nothing but applying *control*; as we are sure, that even a regard to their reputation (if any such thing exists in them) would oblige them to cover, to conceal, to suppress, and consequently to prevent, all cure of the grievances of India. For what can be discovered, which is not to their disgrace? Every attempt to correct an abuse would be a satire on their former administration. Every man they should pretend to call to an account, would be found their instrument or their accomplice. They can never see a beneficial regulation, but with a view to defeat it. The shorter the tenure of such persons, the better would be the chance of some amendment.

But the system of the bill is different. It calls in persons no wise concerned with any act censured by parliament; persons generated with, and for the reform of which, they are themselves the

most essential part. To these the chief regulations in the bill are helps, not fetters; they are authorities to support, not regulations to restrain them. From these we look for much more than innocence. From these we expect zeal, firmness, and unremitting activity. Their duty, their character, binds them to proceedings of vigour, and they ought to have a tenure in their office which precludes all fear, whilst they are acting up to the purposes of their trust; a tenure without which, none will undertake plans that require a series and system of acts. When they know that they cannot be whispered out of their duty, that their public conduct cannot be censured without a public discussion; that the schemes which they have begun will not be committed to those who will have an interest and credit in defeating and disgracing them; then we may entertain hopes. The tenure is for four years, or during their good behaviour. That good behaviour is as long as they are true to the principles of the bill; and the judgment is in either House of Parliament. This is the tenure of your judges; and the valuable principle of the bill is, to make a judicial administration for India. It is to give confidence in the execution of a duty, which requires as much perseverance and fortitude as can fall to the lot of any that is born of woman.

As to the gain by party, from the Right Honourable gentleman's bill, let it be shewn, that this supposed party advantage is pernicious to its object, and the objection is of weight; but until this is done, and this has not been attempted, I shall consider the sole objection, from its tendency to promote the interest of a party, as altogether contemptible. The kingdom is

divided into parties, and it ever has been so divided, and it ever will be so divided ; and if no system for relieving the subjects of this kingdom from oppression, and snatching its affairs from ruin, can be adopted, until it is demonstrated that no party can derive an advantage from it, no good can ever be done in this country. If party is to derive an advantage from the reform of India, (which is more than I know, or believe) it ought to be that party which alone, in this kingdom, has its reputation, nay its very being, pledged to the protection and preservation of that part of the empire. Great fear is expressed, that the commissioners named in this bill will shew some regard to a minister out of place. To men made like the objectors, this must appear criminal. Let it however be remembered by others, that if the commissioners should be his friends, they cannot be his slaves. But dependants are not in a condition to adhere to friends, nor to principles, nor to any uniform line of conduct. They may begin censors, and be obliged to end accomplices. They may be even put under the direction of those whom they were appointed to punish.

The fourth and last objection is, That the bill will hurt public credit. I do not know whether this requires an answer. But if it does, look to your foundations. The sinking fund is the pillar of credit in this country ; and let it not be forgot, that the distresses, owing to the mismanagement of the East India Company, have already taken a million from that fund by the non-payment of duties. The bills drawn upon the Company, which are about four millions, cannot be accepted without the consent of the treasury. The treasury, acting under a parliamentary trust and authority,

authority, pledges the public for these millions. If they pledge the public, the public must have a security in its hands for the management of this interest, or the national credit is gone. For otherwise it is not only the East India Company, which is a great interest, that is undone, but, clinging to the security of all your funds, it drags down the rest, and the whole fabric perishes in one ruin. If this bill does not provide a direction of integrity and of ability competent to that trust, the objection is fatal. If it does, public credit must depend on the support of the bill.

It has been said, if you violate this charter, what security has the charter of the Bank, in which public credit is so deeply concerned, and even the charter of London, in which the rights of so many subjects are involved? I answer, In the like case they have no security at all—No—no security at all. If the Bank should, by every species of mismanagement, fall into a state similar to that of the East India Company; if it should be oppressed with demands it could not answer, engagements which it could not perform, and with bills for which it could not procure payment; no charter should protect the mismanagement from correction, and such public grievances from redress. If the city of London had the means and will of destroying an empire, and of cruelly oppressing and tyrannizing over millions of men as good as themselves, the charter of the city of London should prove no sanction to such tyranny and such oppression. Charters are kept, when their purposes are maintained: they are violated when the privilege is supported against its end and its object.

Now, Sir, I have finished all I proposed to say, as my reasons for giving my vote to this Bill. If

I am wrong, it is not for want of pains to know what is right. This pledge, at least, of my rectitude I have given to my country.

And now, having done my duty to the Bill, let me say a word to the author. I should leave him to his own noble sentiments, if the unworthy and illiberal language with which he has been treated, beyond all example of parliamentary liberty, did not make a few words necessary; not so much in justice to him, as to my own feelings. I must say then, that it will be a distinction honourable to the age, that the rescue of the greatest number of the human race that ever were so grievously oppressed, from the greatest tyranny that was ever exercised, has fallen to the lot of abilities and dispositions equal to the task; that it has fallen to one who has the enlargement to comprehend, the spirit to undertake, and the eloquence to support, so great a measure of hazardous benevolence. His spirit is not owing to his ignorance of the state of men and things; he well knows what snares are spread about his path, from personal animosity, from court intrigues, and possibly from popular delusion. But he has put to hazard his ease, his security, his interest, his power, even his darling popularity, for the benefit of a people whom he has never seen. This is the road that all heroes have trod before him. He is traduced and abused for his supposed motives. He will remember, that obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory: he will remember, that it was not only in the Roman customs, but it is in the nature and constitution of things, that calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph. These thoughts will support  
a mind,

a mind, which only exists for honour, under the burthen of temporary reproach. He is doing indeed a great good ; such as rarely falls to the lot, and almost as rarely coincides with the desires, of any man. Let him use his time. Let him give the whole length of the reins to his benevolence. He is now on a great eminence, where the eyes of mankind are turned to him. He may live long, he may do much. But here is the summit. He never can exceed what he does this day.

He has faults ; but they are faults that, though they may in a small degree tarnish the lustre, and sometimes impede the march of his abilities, have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great virtues. In those faults, there is no mixture of deceit, of hypocrisy, of pride, of ferocity, of complexional despotism, or want of feeling for the distresses of mankind. His are faults which might exist in a descendant of Henry the Fourth of France, as they did exist in that father of his country. Henry the Fourth wished that he might live to see a fowl in the pot of every peasant of his kingdom. That sentiment of homely benevolence was worth all the splendid sayings that are recorded of kings. But he wished perhaps for more than could be obtained, and the goodness of the man exceeded the power of the King. But this gentleman, a subject, may this day say this at least, with truth, that he secures the rice in his pot to every man in India. A poet of antiquity thought it one of the first distinctions to a prince whom he meant to celebrate, that through a long succession of generations, he had been the progenitor of an able and virtuous citizen, who by force of the arts of peace, had corrected governments

governments of oppression, and suppressed wars of rapine.

Indole proh quanta juvenis, quantumque daturus  
 Ausoniæ populis, ventura in sæcula civem.  
 Ille super Gangem, super exauditus et Indos,  
 Implebit terras voce; et furialia bella  
 Fulmine compeſcet linguæ.—

This was what was said of the predecessor of the only person to whose eloquence it does not wrong that of the mover of this bill to be compared. But the Ganges and the Indus are the patrimony of the fame of my Honourable friend; and not of Cicero. I confess, I anticipate with joy the reward of those, whose whole consequence, power, and authority, exist only for the benefit of mankind; and I carry my mind to all the people, and all the names and descriptions, that, relieved by this bill, will bless the labours of this Parliament, and the confidence which the best House of Commons has given to him who the best deserves it. The little cavils of party will not be heard, where freedom and happiness will be felt. There is not a tongue, a nation, or religion in India, which will not bless the presiding care and manly beneficence of this House, and of him who proposes to you this great work. Your names will never be separated before the throne of the Divine Goodness, in whatever language, or with whatever rites, pardon is asked for sin, and reward for those who imitate the Godhead in his universal bounty to his creatures. These honours you deserve, and they will surely be paid, when all the jargon, of influence, and party, and patronage, are swept into oblivion.

I have



I have spoken what I think, and what I feel, of the mover of this Bill. An Honourable friend of mine, speaking of his merits, was charged with having made a studied panegyric. I don't know what his was. Mine, I am sure, is a studied panegyric; the fruit of much meditation; the result of the observation of near twenty years. For my own part, I am happy that I have lived to see this day; I feel myself overpaid for the labours of eighteen years, when, at this late period, I am able to take my share, by one humble vote, in destroying a tyranny that exists to the disgrace of this nation, and the destruction of so large a part of the human species.

F I N I S.



